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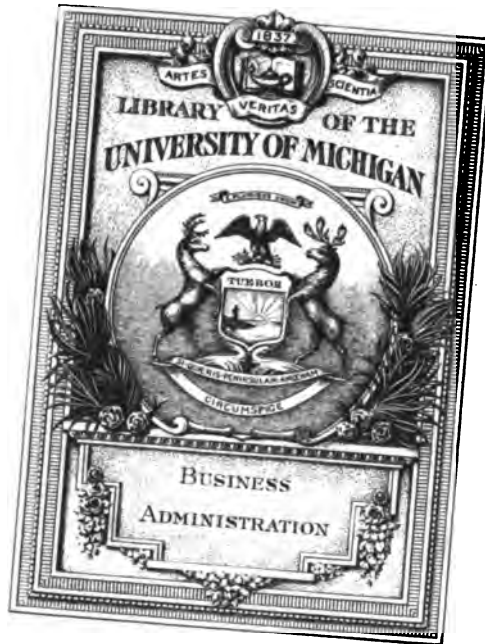
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POSTER DESIGN



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POSTER DESIGN

*Lait pur de la Vingeanne
Stérilisé*



Imp CHARLES VERNEAU 114 Rue Oberkampf, PARIS (LODGE)

*Quillot frères
Montigny sur Vingeanne
Côte d'Or*

**LAIT PUR DE LA VINGEANNE
THÉOPHILE-ALEXANDRE STEINLEN
(1894)**

POSTER DESIGN

A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE POSTER
IN CONTINENTAL EUROPE
ENGLAND AND AMERICA

CHARLES MATLACK PRICE



NEW and ENLARGED EDITION
*Illustrated with Sixty-five Reproductions in
Colors and One Hundred and Fifty
in Monotone*



GEORGE W. BRICKA
New York City



Ammu
NC
1810
-P94
1922
BKS

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FOREWORD *to the* ORIGINAL EDITION

In the preparation of this book the author was prompted by various considerations, and in its presentation has endeavored to give to these several considerations their proper relative importance.

While the book is designed to possess a certain historical value, it is intended primarily to develop an accurate, intelligent, comprehensive and basic *critical analysis* of poster design in Europe and America.

The illustrations, covering the entire range of significant posters to the present date, have been selected and arranged with much care, and with an idea of showing the underlying principles involved in poster-design with the greatest clearness, and only by examples which are the best from the greatest number of points of excellency, taking into consideration the several elements entering into their design.

It has seemed advisable not to confuse the purely æsthetic and psychological principles of design with any considerations of *technical* points relating to the actual details of *painting*, or with points relating to *mechanical processes* of reproduction and the like. These no less important practical considerations of the subject may be better presented in books devoted entirely to such matters.

A co-relative motive in the selection of the illustrations of the book has also been the desire to preserve, in a permanent and convenient form, many interesting and excellent posters which are hard to obtain, or of inconvenient bulk to preserve.

Many of the illustrations have been secured with considerable difficulty, some, indeed, being of a scarcity which makes their acquisition quite impossible to-day. In addition to these, it is my pleasure, owing to the generous co-operation of certain designers, to include some hitherto unpublished drawings.

In the matter of the actual size of the reproductions, as they appear, it may be stated at the outset that a poster design is successful or poor regardless of its actual size. The actual dimensions of a poster form its most superficial part, and for this reason I have adhered to a more or less uniform size for the illustrations. The *design*, not the *size*, makes the poster, and as considerations of *design* form the basis of the book, an element so purely arbitrary and unessential as *size* may be disregarded. The titles of all posters reproduced in the book will be printed in *italics*, for convenience in reference.

I take this opportunity to express my thanks for courteous assistance rendered me by Mr. F. D. Casey of "Collier's Weekly," Mr. E. S. Duneka of "Harper's Magazine," Mr. J. H. Chapin of "Scribner's Magazine," Mr. E. S. Rounds of the Pierce-Arrow Motor Car Company, Mr. Edward Pearson Chapman, Mr. Earnest Elmo Calkins, Mr. Bruce Edwards, Mr. Guernsey Moore, Mr. Robert J. Wildhack, Mr. Adolph Treidler, Mr. Edward Penfield, Mr. Hamilton King, Mr. Walter Primley, Mr. Julian E. Garnsey, and Miss Helen Dryden. For valuable suggestions in the preparation of this volume, Mr. H. Calkins, Jr., of Stewart and Company, Publishers. I wish also to express my indebtedness to the following European and American lithographers and printers: Imp. Chaix, Imp. Lemercie, Imp. F. Champenois, Imp. C. H. Verneau, Imp. Edw. Ancourt, Grafia, Schon & Maison, G. Schuh & Cie., Metropolitan Printing Company and the Miner Lithographic Company.

In conclusion, I would say that it has been my sincere endeavor to present a collection of thoroughly interesting and significant illustrations, with pertinent text to form a definitive treatise in a field where no work of the kind has hitherto appeared or is now available.

C. MATLACK PRICE.

NEW YORK, September, 1912.

FOREWORD to the NEW EDITION.

Since the original writing of "POSTERS," in 1911-12, remarkable developments have taken place in the field of display advertising.

From the early days of the poster as a "fad," or an opportunity for the art student or the play-hours of an illustrator, it had developed from 1893 to 1912 as a commercially recognized and demonstrably valuable method of advertising a wide variety of products.

The World War added a great and dramatic chapter to the development and publicity value of the poster, and in the years since the war the design of posters has attained a higher level than at any time previous.

This is especially true of the "twenty-four-sheet," or large billboard poster, upon which large sums of money are being spent today by national advertisers. Theatrical posters have waned almost to the point of extinction, and production costs have stopped the making of those interesting smaller posters which used to announce the new issues of the leading magazines. In place of these, however, there is a strong showing of motion picture posters, tobacco and cigarette posters, and posters advertising food products, soaps, automobile tires and national makes of clothing. Many of these attain a high order of poster merit, and at the present writing show a continuous improvement in simplicity and large effect of design, as well as in their lettering.

The present edition of this book will, it is hoped, fill the normal demand which has existed since the previous edition was exhausted. Advertisers, advertising agencies, publicity men, libraries, committees, students and teachers will find in it all the essentials of poster education, all the elements of critical analysis which commended the previous edition and made it the standard treatise on poster design. In addition, the writer has tried, in this revised and enlarged edition, to bring the illustrations

and text as nearly as possible up to date by including many of the most important posters which have appeared in recent years.

By way of being more accurate and specific, the title of the book has been changed from "Posters" to "Poster Design," since the text was, and is, designed mainly to develop a critical faculty in creating or judging the poster from the angle of design rather than of advertising.

Virtually all the text and illustrations of the previous edition have been retained, and the revision has taken the form of enlargement rather than of substitution. The most important substitution is that of Chapter VI, "Posters and the World War," for the former Chapter VI, "American Theatrical Posters," the latter being somewhat out of date.

For permission to reproduce new illustrations, the writer wishes to express his sincere gratitude to the artists, advertisers, and advertising agencies who have extended their courtesy in the matter, especially to Mr. Heyworth Campbell, Mr. F. A. Wilson, The Erickson Company, Mr. J. W. Mettler, Messrs. Hart, Schaffner and Marx, The Holeproof Hosiery Company, The Edison Company and B. T. Batsford, Ltd., of England, and hopes that the generous and widespread appreciation which was accorded to the earlier editions of "Posters" will be extended to the new "Poster Design."

C. MATLACK PRICE.

New York, October, 1922.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD TO THE ORIGINAL EDITION	v
FOREWORD TO THE NEW EDITION	vii
CHAPTER I.—POSTERS	Pages 1-14
The subject in general. Points regarding poster design. The use of color. Psychological impressions. Scale. Some general rules illustrated by reproductions of posters by T.-Alexandre Steinlen, Jules Chéret, Robert J. Wildhack, Tom Hall and Earl Horter.	
CHAPTER II.—THE WORK OF JULES CHÉRET	Pages 15-31
The French Poster as exemplified by the work of Jules Chéret, illustrated with reproductions of typical examples of his work.	
CHAPTER III.—POSTERS CONTINENTAL AND ENGLISH	Pages 33-127
A comprehensive survey of poster design, paying special attention to national characteristics— <i>France</i> ; the work of Thèophile-Alexandre Steinlen, Alphonse Mucha, Eugène Grasset, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Pierre Bonnard, George Meunier, Lucien Métivet, A. Cossard, Jean Paléologue, and others.— <i>England</i> ; the development of poster design as exemplified by the work of Frederick Walker, Aubrey Beardsley, Walter Crane, R. Anning Bell, the "Beggartaff Brothers," J. W. Simpson, Gordon Craig, Dudley Hardy, Maurice Greiffenhagen, J. Hassall, Will Owen and others.— <i>Germany</i> ; the modern poster; the work of Ludwig Hohlwein and others.— <i>Belgium</i> ; the steamship posters of H. Cassiers.— <i>Italy</i> ; typical examples.— <i>Switzerland</i> ; the "Société Suisse d'Affiches Artistiques."— <i>Spain</i> ; the slow development of the art; the modern work of "Marco" and others.— <i>Hungary</i> ; note on the work of four designers.— <i>Russia</i> ; the genius of Léon Bakst.— <i>Japan</i> ; poster values in Japanese art; an example of Toyokuni.	

-
-
- CHAPTER IV.—AMERICAN POSTERS Pages 129-213
The growth of poster design in America. The yearly increasing development and improvement. The work of Will H. Bradley, Edward Penfield, Frank Hazenplug, Louis Rhead, J. J. Gould, Maxfield Parrish, Robert J. Wildhack, J. C. Leyendecker, Louis Fancher, Leon Gordon, Adolph Tiedler, M. C. Perley, F. Nelson Abbott, John E. Sheridan, Walter Whitehead, Neysa McMein and others.
- CHAPTER V.—THE WORK OF EDWARD PENFIELD Pages 215-249
A critical analysis of the work of Mr. Penfield paying particular attention to the development of his style. Illustrated with many rare examples.
- CHAPTER VI.—POSTERS AND THE WORLD WAR Pages 251-297
Some of the more salient features, illustrated with fifty-one poster reproductions by Brangwyn, Hassall, Lipscomb, (*England*); Leroux, Faivre, Jonas, Scott, (*France*); Benda, (*Poland*); Preissig, (*Czecho-Slovakia*); Mauzan, (*Italy*); Falls, Utaff, Bull, Sterner, Sarka, Ralieggh, Ashe, Whitehead, Leyendecker, Cooper, Illian, Sheridan, Young, Foringer, Smith, Fisher, Herter, Hopper, Emerson, Taylor, Wright, Grant, Flagg, Penfield and Welsh, (*America*).
- CHAPTER VII.—SOME MAGAZINE COVERS Pages 299-355
A critical and comparative study of the poster values of certain typical magazine covers by Edward Penfield, Maxfield Parrish, J. J. Gould, Guernsey Moore, The Leyendecker Brothers, Robert J. Wildhack, Adolph Treidler and others.
- CHAPTER VIII.—THE CAPACITY OF THE POSTER Pages 357-364
Some concluding theories with regard to the finer points involved in the conception and analysis of poster design.
- INDEX Pages 365-368

LIST OF ARTISTS ILLUSTRATED

F. NELSON ABBOTT	199
ANONYMOUS	111, 257, 259, 267, 275
E. M. ASHE	279
LÉON BAKST	125
C. C. BEALE	201
AUBREY BEARDSLEY	63, 65
"BEGGARSTAFF BROTHERS"	71, 73
R. ANNING BELL	67
WLADISLAW T. BENDA	273, 295
PIERRE BONNARD	53
WILL H. BRADLEY	131, 133, 135, 137
FRANK BRANGWYN	265
GEORGE BREHM	171
F. GREGORY BROWN	87, 93
HELEN BYRNE BRYCE	93
CHARLES LIVINGSTON BULL	277, 341
CECIL L. BURNS	267
BLENDON CAMPBELL	191
H. CASSIERS	105, 107
FRED CHAPMAN	271
JULES CHÉRET	9, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31
F. G. COOPER	183, 185, 285
A. COSSARD	57
E. A. COX	89
GORDON CRAIG	77
WALTER CRANE	69
EDMUND DAVENPORT	207
HELEN DRYDEN	343

RUTH EASTMAN	347
CASPER EMERSON	291
JULES ABLE FAIVRE	253, 257
C. B. FALLS	277, 283, 351
LOUIS FANCHER	173, 175
HARRISON FISHER	289
JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG	295
A. E. FORINGER	289
LEON GORDON	205
J. J. GOULD	145, 317
GORDON GRANT	295
EUGÈNE GRASSET	51
MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN	83
TOM HALL	13
GUNNAR HALLSTRÖM	109
DUDLEY HARDY	79
J. HASSALL	81, 263
FRANK HAZENPLUG	141
WILMOT HEITLAND	203
ALBERT HERTER	289
A. HOHENSTEIN	119
LUDWIG HOHLWEIN	97, 99, 101
E. HOPPER	291
EARL HORTER	13
AUGUST HUTAFF	277
GEORGE ILLIAN	287
LUCIEN JONAS	257
E. MCKNIGHT KAUFFER	91

List of Artists Illustrated

XIII

AUGUSTE LEROUX	257
F. X. LEYENDECKER	321, 323
J. C. LEYENDECKER	153, 155, 157, 159, 161, 281, 325, 327, 329
GUY LIPSCOMBE	261
MARCO	123
N. MAUZAN	269
M. MAZZA	117
NEYSA McMEIN	193, 345
L. METLICOVITZ	113, 115
LUCIEN MÉTIVET	361
GEORGE MEUNIER	55
HARRY MORSE MEYERS	209
GUERNSEY MOORE	317, 319
WALLACE MORGAN	287
ALPHONSE MUCHA	39, 41, 43, 45, 47
WILLIAM OBERHARDT	209
WILL OWEN	81
JEAN PALÉOLOGUE	59
MAXFIELD PARRISH	147, 149, 151, 331, 333, 335
HERBERT PAUS	353
C. PELLEGRINI	121
EDWARD PENFIELD	139, 214, 217, 219, 221, 223, 225, 227, 229, 231, 233, 235, 237, 239, 241, 243, 245, 247, 249, 295, 297, 301, 303, 305, 307, 309, 311, 313, 315, 359.
M. C. PERLEY	187
C. COLES PHILLIPS	195
"P. K. S."	95
V. PREISSIG	271

XIV**List of Artists Illustrated**

HENRY RALEIGH	279
LOUIS RHEAD	143
R. T. ROUSSEL	85
CHARLES SARKA	279
GEORGES SCOTT	255
JOHN E. SHERIDAN	197, 287, 349
J. W. SIMPSON	75
JESSIE WILCOX SMITH	213, 289
THÈOPHILE-ALEXANDRE STEINLEN	Frontispiece, 35, 37, 363
FREDERICK DORR STEELE	355
ALBERT STERNER	277
F. WALKER TAYLOR	291
GEORGE TIPPEL	103
HENRI DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC	49, 50
ADOLPH TREIDLER	177, 179, 181, 339
TOYOKUNI	127
FREDERICK WALKER	61
F. H. WARREN	93
H. DEVITT WELSH	293
WALTER WHITEHEAD	211, 279
ROY MARVIN WILCOX	189
ROBERT J. WILDHACK	11, 163, 165, 167, 169, 337
GEORGE WRIGHT	291
CRAWFORD YOUNG	287

CHAPTER I.

The Subject in General

Although the poster stands where all who run may read, and although we spontaneously admire, or thoughtlessly condemn it, few ever stop to formulate a reason for doing the one or the other, or to establish a critical working standpoint in the matter.

Most people honestly and kindly refrain from random criticism of etchings or Japanese prints for obvious reasons, but consider, perhaps not entirely without cause, that since the poster is literally thrown in their faces, they have a natural right to discuss it even from entirely superficial viewpoints. Nor is it going too far to say that the principles underlying the design of a good poster are no less subtle, or less dependent upon purely abstract tenets of Art, than are the principles underlying the design of a good etching or a good Japanese print.

The poster design must have a clear simplicity of motive and a vigorous, sometimes bizarre, conception in design and treatment. It is to be supposed that until a few years ago the artist or designer considered himself above his task when he was working on these "advertisements," and failed to produce a successful poster because he failed to realize that he was engaged either in a difficult problem, or in one worthy of his best efforts. It was left to the French to show the world how much of beauty and of inspiration could enter into the poster, and it was many years before the designing world at large learned its lesson (if indeed, it may yet be said to have learned) from the daring, sparkling sheets of flaming color that have decorated the streets of Paris.

And this elusive, subtle entity—the poster—seems almost to defy definition and to baffle analysis. It is so meteoric, so explosive, that only in disjointed paragraphs can it be suggested.

Hamilton King, who stands with those at the head of poster design in America, has epitomized some essentials in expressing his theories, the grasp of these essentials, however, being the result of unusually intelligent and appreciative studies in France.

He says that the poster should “seize a moment—exploit a situation with one daring sweep of the pencil or brush. The poster is not a portrait, nor a study—it is an impression—a flash of line, a sweep of color . . . all that can be told of a tale in the passing of an instant. It is dramatic and imaginative, yet it is saliently sincere.”

Often it verges upon the caricature, always it is exaggerated, and it is by no means marred by a touch of humor—in conception or treatment, though this should always combine unmistakable refinement with a certain degree of subtlety.

The poster must first catch the eye, and having caught it, hold the gaze, and invite further though brief inspection. The advertisement which is its reason for existence must be conveyed directly, clearly and pictorially. It must be well designed, well colored, well printed and well drawn—and these qualifications are stated in their order of importance. Above all, the *design—chic*, bizarre, an inspiration—a flash of thought in the brain-pan, flaring up in a blaze of line and color, however short-lived. It should be pyrotechnic, and should depend for its impression, like a rocket, upon the rushing flight of its motion, and the brilliant, even if momentary, surprise of its explosion.

Unquestionably our greatest mistake, next to our failure to take it seriously enough, is to take it too seriously.

A great many points enter into the consideration of poster design,

and so intangible, to a certain extent, are the motives in a successful poster that perhaps a negative enumeration is a more graphic method of analysis than any other.

By an understanding of certain principles to be avoided, and an elimination of these; the more essential, though often elusive, must remain in greater clearness, and many examples may be rejected at a glance, leaving a narrower field to consider, and a range capable of a more definite form of analysis.

Broadly, one would say, avoid three distances, masses of small letters, or too many letters of any kind, too elaborate a chiaroscuro, too intricate detail, and ill-studied values in shade and shadow. Although many of these dangerous motives may appear in good and successful posters, one will observe that they appear usually in the work of men capable of handling them with a compelling and masterful hand. Certainly their avoidance is more than a mere matter of discretion.

The safer course lies in simplicity, since the simplest poster is always the most effective, though obvious as this paradox may seem, it is ignored in nine cases out of ten.

Enumerating the above points, it must always be kept in mind that a poster, as such, is a failure if it is not *effective*, and the obvious deduction from this is that anything likely to detract from the *effect* is plainly dangerous, and to be handled with the greatest care.

In the first place, the use of more than one distance, or picture-plane, implies perspective, and in many cases, a background. The action in a poster should take place at the front of the stage, preferably as though thrown on a screen; and as a background necessarily introduces objects too small to be readily understood at a distance, it is very likely to confuse the principal figure in the composition, and render the principal letters—the *raison d'être* of the thing—more or less difficult to read.

Distances, if introduced at all must be *suggested* rather than definitely drawn, and must in any case be thoroughly subordinate to the main action. Thus manipulated, they do not detract from the strength of the composition, and the question and occasional value of their uses is taken up from a more theoretical standpoint later. It will be seen, however, that a background appears in none of the illustrations of this chapter, and it may be said that these were selected as examples of thoroughly successful posters.

In the second place, with regard to lettering; masses of small letters are not only useless, being illegible except at close range, but tend to confuse the composition, and detract from the importance of the principal figures, and the general clearness of the conception. The same, in part, may be said of too much lettering of any kind. One must not stop to read a poster—it must be seen and understood in its entirety at a glance.

Incidentally, it should be remembered that lettering arranged vertically—one letter under another, is quite inexcusable, though many designers thoughtlessly stand words on end in a deluded groping for originality which they have vaguely felt to be lacking in the main design of the poster. While Egyptian and Chinese characters were intended to be read in columns, Roman letters have always been arranged in horizontal lines, and quite putting aside the unpardonable anachronism of arranging them in any other way, the offence against legibility alone should strike one immediately.

With regard to unity of principal motive and lettering—a most important point—it is rather difficult to make rules to which ample exception may not be taken. Generally speaking, the best poster is one in which the figure or keynote is a unit with the letters—the one entirely lost without the other. This has been almost invariably achieved in the work of M. Chéret, and Mr. Penfield.

It must not be supposed that this unity necessarily implies an

actual incorporation of figure and legend, desirable as such an arrangement is; it is rather a question of *relative scale*, and mistakes in both directions are common. Generally, the mass, the telling quantity of the poster, utterly outweighs the lettering, which suffers eclipse, in consequence, and tends to make the whole rather an "advertising picture" than a poster. Sometimes the noise of the lettering drowns the action of the principal figure, though this is far more rare than the first. Either will readily be conceded to be most unfortunate as well as unnecessary, if only one weigh the relative values of the two members in the preliminary sketch.

In this connection it seems important at the outset to cultivate a keen discrimination between "Posters" proper, and "Advertising Pictures." The first form the subject of this book—the second must, for obvious reasons, be rejected. There is no limit to this class, for any picture, of whatever kind, may have a line of advertising tacked to it (or as readily taken away), the whole presenting a sheet in which no element of original design has entered, and which attracts, or fails to attract solely by reason of the intrinsic interest or stupidity of the picture, as such.

In the third general rule, regarding an elaborate system of light and shade, or much intricate detail, it is obvious that much of its value is wasted on a poster, and not only becomes lost when seen across a street, but has a tendency to produce a monotone in mass—a fatal defect where a strikingly unbalanced composition is so essential. Good posters of elaborate chiaroscuro or detail are good in spite of it—not because of it.

Color in posters, relatively speaking, is not nearly so important as design, and it may be said that while bad coloring cannot seriously mar a good design, good coloring will not save a poor design. One has seen excellent posters in black and white, and wretched posters in "six colors and gold." The ideal poster will present, of course, a strong, impulsive design, in bold and dashing lines, and its story will be told in a "sweep of line and

a flash of color." Nor should it be forgotten that it is not the number of colors used, but rather their selection and disposition that count. In the matter of poster-coloring, the work of M. Chéret shows a master-hand, nor can his schemes be said to be based on any theoretical scales of harmony. If any theory existed at all, it was that a sensation of *surprise*, a mental shock, must be produced even at the risk of violent chromatic discords. His favorite trio—red, yellow and blue, in their most vivid intensities, recklessly placed next each other, invariably strike a clarion note—and make a good poster.

A fundamental principle embracing all initial paradoxes of design, and one perhaps more important than anything in the conception of a successful poster, concerns itself with a question of *scale*.

With regard to this element, it may be said that a design will make a good or a poor poster whether it be a book-plate, or a six-sheet fence-placard. Mere *size*, mere superficial area, will not save a weak poster, were it magnified a hundred times, while a book-plate or a magazine-cover may fulfil the severest test, point by point, as a good piece of poster-work.

A book-shop, indeed, has often attracted one across the street by reason of the strength of design in certain book-covers, of the foreign, paper-bound variety, in the window, while the average theatrical poster occupying a space ten feet by twenty has not caused any sensation of interest, either optical or mental.

This matter of scale should be constantly borne in mind, and the discerning eye will readily appreciate strong "poster-values" in many small yet striking instances.

Perhaps the clearest illustration of exactly what underlies this "scale" so essential to a good poster, is to consider the sense-impression given by the familiar Egyptian mortuary statuette of Osiris. This figure is never more than twelve inches in height, and is usually much less, yet the

distinct impression of scale given by its subtle proportions is that of a colossus. The analogy in a poster is the understanding that *something larger than the drawing itself* must be suggested. In fine, it is a sense of "suggestive proportion" which will make a figure four feet high seem life-size, or a figure at life-size suggest an *idea* larger than the actual boundaries of the paper. This idea is as absolutely essential and equally as elusive as are all the most vital points underlying the conception of a design which shall possess the best poster-values.

As a concluding generality it is eminently important to remember that there are two distinct kinds of *impression*, and that as the success of the poster depends upon the kind of impression it makes, we should keenly understand these two great divisions.

There are a group of impressions which are arrived at by processes of the *mind*, and an equally large group which are arrived at by processes of the *senses*. The first we reach by memory, by connotation, by logic, by comparison, or by any other process peculiar to the human mind. The second is generally stronger, and is instantaneous and vivid, and though it may partake of certain properties of the first, any borrowed quality has become so much a matter of instinct as to bring the mind into very little play.

It is obvious that it is to the second of these groups of impressions that the poster should be tuned. It should not be a matter for elaborate study, or comprehension through comparison, but should make its story felt *instinctively* by the senses. It should be different from a picture in exactly the same way that a play is different from a book—the one appealing primarily through the senses, the other through the mind.

Perhaps the clearest working rudiments that can be reached, after a study of fundamental theories, are to be had graphically, by a careful analysis of the illustrations in this chapter, taken point by point,—recapitu-

lating the features happily conspicuous by their absence, as well as those which go to make the posters successful.

In M. Steinlen's milk poster* can be seen what may be made of an essentially simple and possibly uninteresting theme. "*Pure milk from Vingeanne*"—what more unsuggestive or even banal? And yet for charm of conception, simplicity of motive and strength of execution, it were difficult to find a more thoroughly successful poster. The action is clear, the presentation graphic, and the whole, in line and color, undeniably strong.

M. Steinlen has not confused the eye or mind with any distances or elaborate flights of draughtsmanship. His story is vigorously and strongly told, at the front of the stage, with a compelling charm that holds this poster in the mind long after it has gone from sight. With the exception of the lettering, the poster was immortalized in a set of nursery tiles "—a bright-haired, demure little girl, with a sweet and guileless face and crimson frock, drinking milk from a bowl, impatiently beset by three envious, aspiring, hopeful cats"

In the poster for "*Yvette Guilbert*," by Jules Chéret, one may see a no less excellent presentation of values than in the example by M. Steinlen, though the two designs are obviously conceived along different lines. One is full of vivacious superficiality—the other of demure reserve. Granted, there has been only one Chéret—of his work more shall be said later; the immediate consideration being an analysis of this sparkling sketch of Mlle. Yvette Guilbert as a poster.

*The illustrations in this chapter on initial essentials are not selected with a view to any classification by period or nationality, the basis being simply an aim to present certain fundamental theories in the clearest and most direct way.



YVETTE GUILBERT
JULES CHÉRET

First, it is simple. Second, its story is told in a simultaneous flash of three impressions. The eye is attracted, with an irresistible sense of elation, however momentary, to the *chic*, joyous figure of a very prepossessing singer, and at the same instant, and with no conscious effort, it may be learned not only who she is but where she may be seen, and at what hour. The whole story in the fraction of a second—nothing to be deciphered, studied, or left to run the risk of being overlooked.

The whole poster has been seen, the whole reason for its existence made manifest in a flash—but the impression of pleasure, and one might almost say of irresponsibility in the matter is more lasting. It is a good poster.

And let it be reiterated, at the risk of repetition; there is no background, no elaborate detail, no masses of confusing and irrelevant lettering, nor any single line or motive that has not been seen and comprehended in its entirety in the first passing glance.

In Mr. Wildhack's "*September Scribner's*" magazine poster, it might be said that the height of poster design in America has been reached. It were hard to conceive the possibility of so simple, yet so strong a suggestion of a potential reality at a single glance.

This poster flares from a magazine stand, and carries with it a group of physical sensations as instantaneous as they are irresistible. One knows that it is summer, that it is very warm, with the sun almost overhead, and that one is on a sea-beach. The vista of dismal city streets is lost for the moment, and one feels almost grateful to this bit of colored paper for its vacation suggestions. And yet how little of actual delineation the mind has to feed upon in this poster. The secret lies in an apparently unerring conception, on the part of the designer, of the psychology of the thing. The essentials have been thrown into the limelight, to the

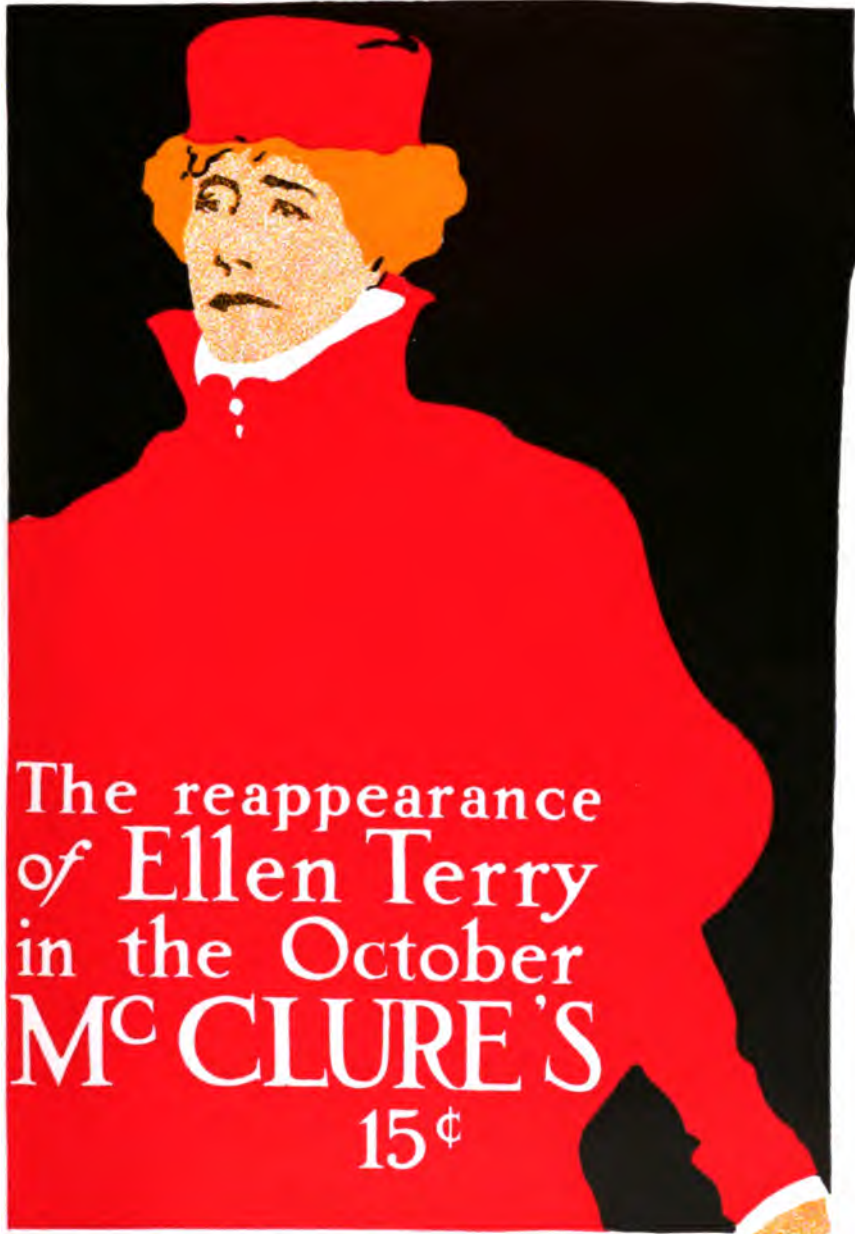


*Courtesy of
Scribner's Magazine.*

SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE POSTER
ROBERT J. WILDHACK (1906)

exclusion of confusing detail. No sea, no horizon, no summer pavilion have been crowded in. One knows that a flat monotone of fine-textured grey, in the blinding, shadeless out-of-doors, is a beach. That a girl in spotless white would not be standing in a desert, is an idea which is grasped and dismissed in the first registration of thought between eye and mind. The conception, indeed, is so instinctive as to be instantaneous and to involve no mental effort. The downward shadow makes the sun almost a physical as well as an optical sensation. The masterful distinction, as well as the delineation of shade and shadow were worthy of a scientist as much as an artist. As to the actual charms of the lady—the Venus of Milo has not many reincarnations to-day, and it is safe to say that a poster is more convincing, and strikes nearer home, if it is not too idealistic. Even if it plays to the gallery, none may gainsay its right to do so, since it comes into our midst unasked, and tries to please us by its simplicity and naïveté. When one asks for bread, he does not want a stone, and desiring a fellow human being, does not want a statue. To complete the chain of absolute appropriateness, borne out by the name of the month and the name of the magazine, the latter is depicted no less saliently and graphically than the former; and the entire poster is eminently sufficient unto itself, borrowing no unexplained motive in its delineation, and leaving no unexplained motive to breed conjecture beyond its boundaries.

Perhaps less subtle, but certainly no less striking from the point of values, is the "*Ellen Terry*" poster, announcing with distinct strength the fact that the feature of the magazine for this month was to be an installment of the *Memoirs of Miss Ellen Terry*. This poster is the result of clever collaboration on the part of Tom Hall, who designed it, and of Earl Horter who drew it, and the general scarcity of their work is equalled only by the excellence of this particular example.



*Courtesy of
McClure's Magazine.*

**McCLURE'S MAGAZINE POSTER
TOM HALL AND EARL HORTER (1907)**

It seems pertinent to comment on its strong theatrical qualities, and to suggest that this magazine poster has audaciously invaded another territory and triumphantly captured the laurels which seem to be so persistently neglected by the stage. For it presents such excellent points of simplicity in motive with unbalanced composition, adequate lettering, bold coloring, refined caricature in the short-hand portrait, and general self-sufficiency throughout, that were it to appear on a theatrical bulletin it would strike a loud and bracing note in that monotone of mediocrity, and mark an epoch, as it were, in the colorless and characterless annals of theatrical "paper."

And with all the points which one has tried to bring up in this chapter, a more critical analysis can be brought to bear upon the following consideration of French, English, Continental and American Posters.

CHAPTER II.

The Work of Jules Chéret.

In electing to submit the work of Jules Chéret before entering upon any general discussion of posters in France, one has been impelled by the fact that his work is illustrative of so many points of excellency in this art that a review of it partakes largely of qualities of a general nature. These posters are all so excellent in so many particulars—they are all so full of that elusive element of audacity so desirable in a poster, that an analysis can point to no defects or express regret for no details of their composition.

Chéret is utterly original, generally subversive, and sometimes almost exasperating in an audacity which throws all precedent to the winds, and launches lightly clad female figures, floating in space—ephemeral as so many soap-bubbles, sparkling, iridescent, and explosive. They seem evoked from airy nothingness, born of daring and fantastic gaiety, and seem joyously to beckon the beholder on with them in a madcap, elusive chase after pleasure. Nor do they ever overstep the proprieties, for they never come to earth, and their radiant fairy grace, startling and provocative postures and actions seem hardly to belong to mere pictures.

Chéret lives "in a sort of fairy world, where playful summer lightning is not unknown. His airy figures of women and children float in space, and so gracious are they as types of happiness that they seem to live in an irradiation."

It has been said that to describe his work adequately we must needs "borrow from this decorator certain of his colors—a lemon yellow,

a geranium red and a midnight blue, and even then we should lack the cunning of the artist so to juxtapose these as to reproduce his effects." Obviously, his work appears at a disadvantage in monotone reproduction, though his wonderfully living line and frantically bold compositions tell their own story and present values which are painfully lacking in the most ambitious chromatic attempts on our own bill-boards.

In motive, Chéret almost invariably chooses a girl for his central figure; in action, he always makes her flashing with life, sparkling with a naïve irresponsibility, and a very impersonation of *chic*.

"*Yvette Guilbert*" has vivacity in the mere curve of her eyebrow, Loïe Fuller is joyously balanced in an aerial fire-dance at the "*Folies Bergere*," and the lady of the "*Job*" cigarette paper sketch seems lingering but an instant to fling some bit of gay raillery over her shoulder before she disappears. The motion in the "*Palais de Glace*" posters needs only the music to which the care-free skaters disport themselves, gracefully balanced like birds on the wing, or with tantalizing smile and beckoning arm, enticing the beholder to join them, while the ballet in the "*Coulisses de l'Opera*" is instinct with life and grace in every line. And with Chéret, it need not necessarily be the delineation of action or personality in his subject, for what could be more filled with that joyous audacity than the saucy "*Diaphane*" poster for a face-powder, or the vivacious grace in the "*Saxoline*" advertisement for an article no more romantic than coal-oil?

This is Chéret—this capacity, almost an instinct, for the seizing of the keynote of his given subject, and for the portrayal of it in an unmistakable way, with the fewest possible strokes of his unerring pencil.

Nor is his color less daring than his composition and line. He realizes how greatly *audacity* counts in a poster, and flings masses of vivid reds, yellows and blues in dazzling contrasts, never jarring but always startling. In his lettering he never forgets that he has a story to tell—a story



COULISSES DE L'OPERA
JULES CHÉRET (1891)

that should be as plain and should give as instantaneous an impression as his figure, and he has never sacrificed the clearness and legibility of the advertisement on his posters to any abstract tenets of art.

In short, he grasped (if, indeed, he may not be said to have originated) the idea that the poster must be a brilliant *tour de force*—an end which shall justify the means of its execution and present in no matter how extravagant a manner, a strong but pleasing shock to eye and mind, together with the clearest and simplest possible expression of the subject in hand to be advertised.

An English critic says:—"His training told him that the first function of advertising is to advertise. His merit as a draughtsman lies, in part, in vivacious rather than correct line: gaiety, as we have seen, is the chief quality of his color: his composition is remarkable on account of the piquancy and appropriateness of his detail."

Throughout his long career, Chéret has remained faithful to his art of poster-making—if we except certain pastels and several mural paintings. None understood better than he the tools he had to work with, for his first labors were as a lithographer's apprentice, until he had mastered the technical side of his art, when he established his own studio and left all but the finer touches on the stones to his assistants.

In his earliest posters Chéret employed a familiar device among lithographers of shading off the color of the background stone, so that he might print at once the dark blue of the sky at the top, and the dark brown of a foreground at the bottom. Later, however, he chose to work rather in sharp contrasts, with violently opposed masses of intense color, and detached legends in yellow or white over his background, while his third period shows posters with a chromatic palette of red, yellow, and blue, with very few other colors, and with an extraordinarily clean rendering of lithographic values.



THEATRE DE L'OPERA CARNAVAL
JULES CHÉRET (1896)
19

It was in 1866 that he began the extraordinary series of *affiches* which has placed his name at the very head of all those that have essayed the poster, and there are over a thousand examples which have been catalogued, with probably many others that have escaped the collector.

Of these the most important are the great series which he made for the Folies Bergeres, the Moulin Rouge and the Alcazar d'Eté, together with the engaging children of the "Buttes Chaumont" series. With the "*Palais de Glace*" series, perhaps his best known are the "*Coulisses de l'Opera*," the "Magasins du Louvre," and the little lady in yellow, of the "Pantomimes Lumineuses," while his dazzling advertisements of cigarettes, drinks, toilet accessories and nearly every item of the paraphernalia of modern civilization are legion. In addition to the music-hall posters are scores of characteristic examples of Chéret's joyous sketches for theatres, circuses, charity fêtes, newspapers, and publishers.

His work has been variously recognized in paragraphs in art papers over all the world, and by the contemporary press of Paris, where numerous editorials appeared from time to time, in which with Gallic generosity and appreciation, were expressed sentiments of sincere gratitude to this "commercial artist" for his lavish gladdening of the streets with merrily dancing figures and riots of exotic coloring.

In point of exhibition, a large collection entirely of posters by Chéret, was shown in the galleries of the Theatre d'Application in Paris in 1890, and in book-form were carefully catalogued in that rare volume: "*Les Affiches Illustrées*" by Ernest Maindron (1886), as well as in an equally rare work, "*Graveurs Français du XIXieme Siècle*" by Henri Beraldi. Unfortunately both these books have long since been out of print, and are unobtainable.

The limitations of a discussion devoted entirely to posters must, of necessity, preclude the presentation of any examples, charming as they are



PALAIS DE GLACE
JULES CHÉRET (1894)

in themselves, of Chéret's fascinating sketches in pastel and *sanguine*. Of these there are thousands—passing fancies, all inspired by the spirit of Watteau and those gallant and romantic artist-dreamers of by-gone days, though in the case of M. Chéret, the call of the day has always taken, when necessary, the precedence over echoes of the past or fantasies of an impossible and Elysian future.

To capitulate the poster values in such illustrations of M. Chéret's work as one is able to present, all desirable elements are apparent to a marked degree, and apparent in no one less than in any other of the several examples.

In none of these posters can be found the indication of three distances or of confusing backgrounds. The action, in all its irrepressible vitality is always at the front of the stage. It is impossible not to see it, or having seen, to ignore it.

No ill-studied values of light and shade, or uselessly elaborated details mar the pure simplicity of Chéret's technique, for his posters were translated in a manner unusually broad and flat in mass and clean in color for lithographs, which usually lose force by reason of muddy values and heavy treatment in general.

There is no perspective, other than that necessarily involved in foreshortening certain members of the body. The figures are flat in delineation as well as in actual mass, yet seem inspired with life in every line.

In point of lettering, every poster is plainly legible even at a considerable distance, for the lettering is admirably in scale with the figures, and is either kept clear of the background, or superposed in absolute contrast. No masses of small letters have taken the eye from the main legend or its coördinate complement—the figure. From a passing motor-car the poster has been seen, read and thoroughly understood in its entirety. And



PALAIS DE GLACE
JULES CHÉRET (1896)
23

let it be carefully observed as a general statement that a large part of the excellence of Chéret's posters lies in the fact that he has given equal importance to his legends and his figures; he has made them co-essential—the one of no greater or less legibility than the other in any respect.

That basic element of *general scale* in the fundamental conception of the design—that suggestion of an idea or action larger than the confines of the sheet—will be found to appear in a singularly logical manner in the illustrations of this chapter. In the case of posters where the *action* or *suggested setting* of the subject carries qualities implying extent or largeness or sufficient interest in themselves, as the Loïe Fuller "*Fire-Dance*," the "*Palais de Glace*" and the "*Coulisses de l'Opera*," it will be found that the entire figure is within the confines of the sheet. The suggestion of an "idea larger than the actual sheet" is carried entirely by the *implied largeness* of the stage, the skating rink or the opera house.

On the other hand, where the independent action which is instinctively implied in the above examples is lacking, as the "*Job*" poster, the "*Diaphane*" face-powder, and the "*Saxoleine*" oil, the suggested idea of *scale* is effected by showing only a portion of the figure. The mental addition of the portion not shown produces the unconscious impression that something has been presented which is larger than the actual confines of such a presentation. Cigarettes and face-powder—and certainly coal oil—carry no idea of the necessary scale of their setting, while of necessity a ballet demands an enormous stage, and a figure on skates demands a large rink—and this setting has been suggested without any insult to public intelligence by its literal delineation. It is a plain instance of "imaginative omission."

Even in the case of "*Yvette Guilbert*," it might be felt that inasmuch as she merely sang, that song might be taking place in a drawing room or on a large stage. The mere idea of *singing* in itself carries no such posi-



LA DANSE DU FEU FOLIES BERGERE
JULES CHÉRET

tively implied scale in setting as the presentation of a ballet or the enjoyment of skating. Consequently, that lack of scale in logical setting has been expressed by showing only a portion of the singer, and the *imagination* is given play in supplying the remainder. It might be submitted as an axiom that if a poster (after clearly presenting its advertisement and appropriately illustrating the same) leaves *nothing* to the imagination, it is not a good poster. This covers those posters which irritate us because of their over-subtle and indecipherable "meaning" as well as those which insult our intelligences by their over-literal and realistic presentation of something that we all know.

And all the host of psychological appeals to instinctive impression and unconscious co-existent thought that are involved in the consideration of *sense-impression* find wonderful expression in all of Chéret's posters. Perhaps the poise and enticing grace of the red-coated skater in the "*Palais de Glace*" would do as well for a dance-hall, but why not suggest that skating at this particular rink offers all the allurements of dancing at the Red Mill? Further, the materialist might caustically enquire—"what expression or gesture rather than any other expression or gesture can possibly suggest face-powder or coal-oil?" One need only consider the posters of "*Diaphane*" and "*Saxoleine*" however, to perceive that in the one an extremely *chic* and prepossessing coquette (who is plainly particular as to her toilet accessories) is taking evident delight in the use of this powder, and that in the other a very charming lady is manifesting equal delight in the result of her employment of this oil in her lamp. *Ergo*, it is to be supposed that these two products, though of widely varied nature in their functions, are nevertheless unquestionably the best of their kind, and to be secured by the public in preference to all substitutes. So much for the "advertising value" of Chéret's posters.

It has been put forward by some that the continuous effervescence



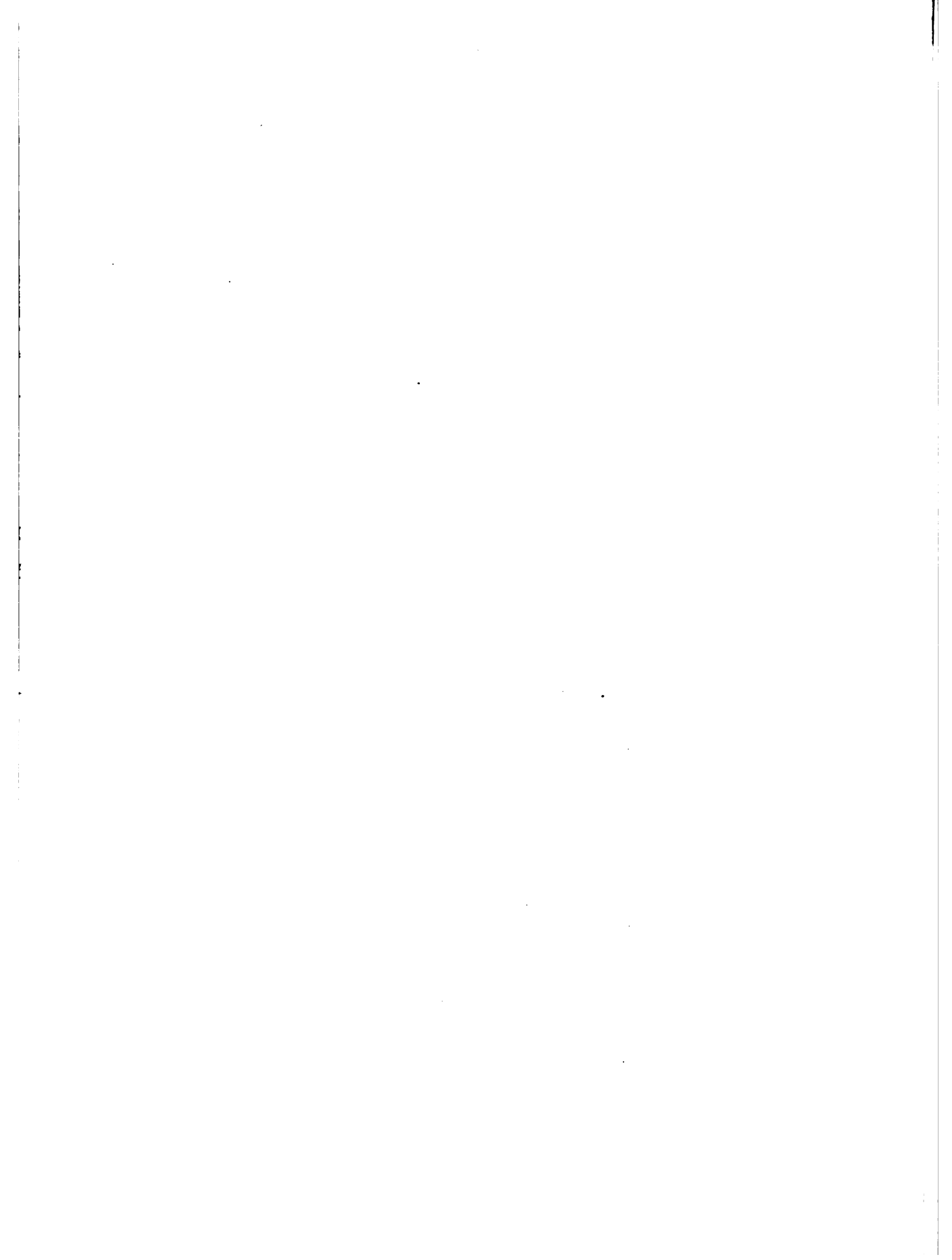
JOB PAPIER A CIGARETTES
JULES CHÉRET (1889)

of Chéret's posters is tiresome and inane, and that brilliant dramatic action is out of place in, for example, a poster for coal-oil. This criticism, however, is of rather a captious nature, and not entirely without a suggestion of "sour grapes." For no hand but that of Chéret has ever produced such varied or such appropriate posters in the whole history of the art. It should be required perhaps, of those who take exception to Chéret's treatment, that they first design or exhibit a poster as good, then one better, before proceeding with adverse criticisms.

Of the color, more has been said elsewhere, and of the thorough excellence of these posters from every standpoint set forth in the first chapter, one feels that their value as general examples, as well as their introduction as particular illustrations, cannot require further comment or analysis.



DIAPHANE RICE POWDER
JULES CHÉRET (1890)





Saxoléine

PETROLE DE SÛRETÉ

EXTRA·BLANC·DÉODORISÉ·ININFLAMMABLE

en Bidons plombés de 5 litres

SAXOLEINE PETROLEUM
JULES CHÉRET (1894)

31

CHAPTER III.

Posters Continental and English.

In considering "foreign posters," it is to be conceded at once that inasmuch as Continental Europe is the birthplace and home of posters in general, it is only one's necessity in writing from a transatlantic viewpoint that sanctions the use of the word "foreign" at all.

For it is in France that poster making was first recognized as an art, and it is France that has characterized it as an art of which the keynote is audacity, *chic*, abandon and sheer cleverness. And of its feeling, Jules Chéret, who first electrified Paris some forty-five years ago, was the leading exponent.

It is in France that the masters worked. Chéret kept Paris in a continual state of amazement, delight and fascination with his flaming, madcap posters, swirling visions of line and color, comet-like, explosive—impossible to ignore or condemn. Steinlen endeared himself by many quaint and clever sheets, and Mucha became famous over night by his exquisite but powerful posters for Sarah Bernhardt. And crowding in their wake came Eugene Grasset, Toulouse-Lautrec, Pierre Bonnard, George Meunier, Lucien Métivet, Cossard, Willette, Guillaume, and a score of others.

At one time even Gustave Doré, Puvis de Chavannes, Viollet-le-Duc, Boutet de Monvel and Vierge entered the lists, and gave the poster an added dignity and standing. It is not their work, however, that has made it what it is, or that will make it what it is capable of becoming. Their contributions were too scattered, too tentative, and even apologetic. The significance of these posters is marred by lack of abandon, and one is

inclined to feel that their authors considered themselves a little above the work. One does not fancy Lord Tennyson writing a limerick.

The posters which the little group of masters has given us repay, however, a close critical analysis, and bear very strongly on the acquisition of an adequate working knowledge of principles of conception, design and general handling.

Preëminently, Chéret leads. The world follows. The designers of England and America, no more than his own countrymen, must perforce study his inimitable style, and make the most they can of it. And this has been done in some instances, and in some a new style, or school of posters has been attempted. This is especially true of England, where the insular peculiarities of the race did not even dare to consider Chéret seriously, or his work as that of an inhabitant of this earth.

One's first consideration, however, deals with the work of those French designers who may be said to have *created* the poster, and having created, to have developed it to a stage where the designers of other nations took it up in their own several manners.

Of Chéret, more has been said elsewhere. Technically, the work of Thèophile-Alexandre Steinlen resembles that of Chéret to some degree. In the work of Steinlen, however, there is a pronounced difference in fundamental feeling and in actual draughtsmanship. An almost unerring excellence and accuracy of proportion are unconsciously felt in even his most fragmentary sketch. Where Chéret's figures float in air, Steinlen's figures are all set very solidly on the ground. His delineation is more conscientious, and if it is less captivating, it nevertheless has a pleasing quality of its own—a quality to which greater similarity may be observed in the early work of Edward Penfield in America than in the work of any of Steinlen's contemporary countrymen. There is none of the abandon of Chéret—Steinlen's work is more reserved, and his expression more literal and



**YVETTE
GUILBERT
THÉOPHILE
ALEXANDRE
STEINLEN
(1894)**



EXPOSITION A LA BODINIÈRE
THÉOPHILE-ALEXANDRE STEINLEN (1894)
37

matter-of-fact. No better study in contrast could be offered than the presentation of the different poster-caricatures of Mlle. Yvette Guilbert, where the points of view both of Chéret and of Steinlen are illustrated in their contemporary renderings of the same subject. Steinlen's humor is quiet and depends largely for its expression upon the grotesque in facial caricature, while Chéret's spirit prefers rather to present in an exaggerated form the actual vivacity of his subject.

Steinlen works in masses of contrasting color; his pictures are graphic, and his lettering is simple in detail and strong in relative scale. In "*Lait pur de la Viergeanne*" little, if anything, could be desired to improve its quality as a good poster, or to make it more thoroughly typical of the style which may be considered as essentially that of Steinlen. The "*Exposition Bodinière*" poster shows the designer at his favorite subject—cats, which he never wearied of sketching in all their infinite variety of posture and mood.

Alphonse Mucha may perhaps be said to be the most perfect and painstaking draughtsman who has ever devoted much serious attention to posters. While his wonderful poster for Sarah Bernhardt in her rôle of "*Gismonda*" (with the "*Medee*," "*Samaritaine*," "*Lorenzaccio*" and others of the series) will always be his masterpieces, collectors prize no less the exquisite little design for the "*Salon des Cent*," and the wonderfully graceful poster for "*Job*" cigarette papers.

In this country he produced a most successful poster for Mrs. Leslie Carter, and executed some masterful mural work in New York in a building intended for the production of German Opera, now a popular music-hall. Nor should his work be forgotten in the pleasure which he has given in the exquisite decoration of innumerable magazine-covers, calendars, and the like. There is a certain charm and sweetness about his work, coupled with an unmistakable element of great strength and faultless draughtsman-

MEDEE

THEATRE DE LA RENAISSANCE



MEDEE
ALPHONSE MUCHA

ship which gives it a singular character of its own. The conscientious elaboration of his ever-original ornament and detail is a source of constant admiration for those who follow his work with any degree of interest, and it is to be regretted that the greater part of it is a serious detriment to much strength that his posters would otherwise possess. It has the fatal defect of producing a monotone, and its value is lost even at comparatively close range. It is only the beautiful grace of such figures as in the "*Salon*" and "*Job*" posters, or the combined grace and sublimity in the Bernhardt series that make up in any degree for their lack of strength. It is a case in which unusual excellence of draughtsmanship and underlying largeness of conception make up in a large measure for over-finesse of detail.

Eugène Grasset, whose work can be likened only to that of Mucha, dignified the poster almost to the grandeur of a stained-glass window, with masses of gorgeous color, heavy outlines like leads, refined conception in design, with an intricate imagination and skill over all. While his posters fail to accost and astonish like those of Chéret, and lack many qualities of strength and simplicity, they are undeniably impressive and certainly sincere. In conception he is an idealist. In delineation, like Mucha, he is more conscientious than Chéret, and depends more on heavy outlines for his figures. His posters are undoubtedly confused, and his lettering often hard to read, either through lack of contrast or ill-chosen design. He has an unfortunate tendency also to introduce too much detail, but succeeds in spite of these detrimental particulars, by virtue of the strength of his compositions and his clear conception of a dominating idea, as in the "*Jeanne d'Arc*" poster for Sarah Bernhardt.

The work of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, apart from his posters of children, was characterized by a *bizarre* element to a marked degree—so marked in fact as to constitute its principal note. Most of his later work consisted of sketches in poster form which might be called, in a sense,



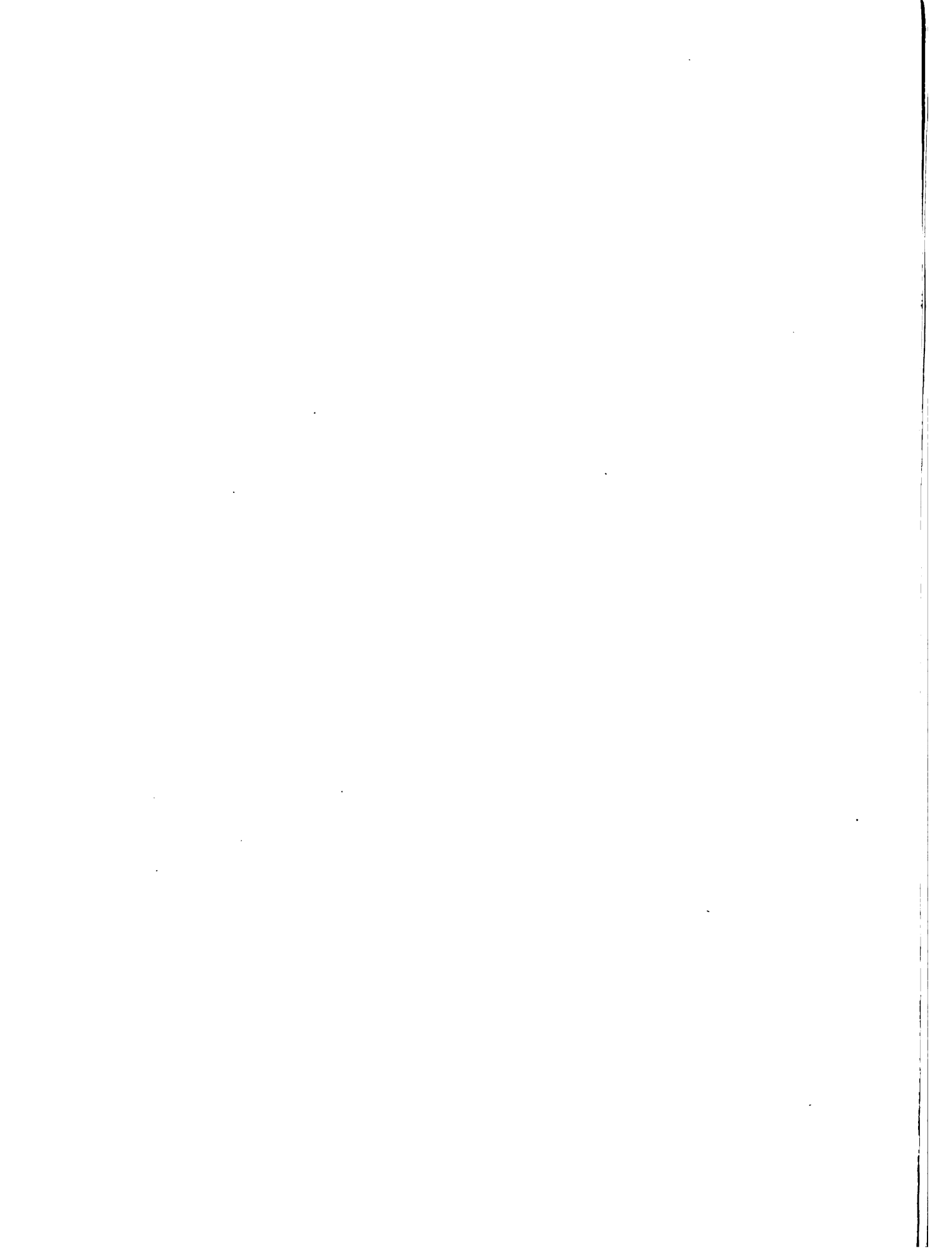
GISMONDA
ALPHONSE MUCHA (1894)
41



LA SAMARITAINE
ALPHONSE MUCHA
43



SALONS DES CENT
ALPHONSE MUCHA (1896)





JOB
ALPHONSE MUCHA
47

"human documents." Among these were some odd caricatures of the leading favorites of contemporary fame in the cabarets and roof-gardens of Paris—"Aristide Bruant," Jane Avril and "*Yvette Guilbert*" being his favorite subjects. The "*Divan Japonais*" is thoroughly typical, depicting in grotesque parody two most eccentric looking members of an audience listening to Yvette Guilbert, who may be recognized on the stage by her famous "black gloves." Lautrec's black and white portrait-sketch of Mlle. Guilbert might be compared with the Chéret and Steinlen posters.

Among less prominent, though perhaps no less talented poster designers of Lautrec's kind was H. G. Ibels, whose point of view in general and technique in particular was very similar. One of his favorite subjects was the popular roof-garden comedienne, Irene Henry, whom he helped to make well-known; while Anquetin, a designer in much the same class, was portraying the vulgar but clever Marguerite Dufay. This completes what might be taken as a series, or group of the music-hall favorites of the moment, of whom Yvette Guilbert was translated into posters by Chéret, Lautrec and Steinlen as well. One should include Cayals in this group, for his work is of the same character, best known to collectors no doubt in his poster for the "Salon des Cent" in 1894.

A very clever designer was Pierre Bonnard, to whom at least two very clever posters are to be credited—one for "*La Revue Blanche*" and another for "France Champagne"—both conceived in a vein thoroughly characteristic both of their author and their audience.

Distinct from the work of Toulouse-Lautrec and the little clique influenced by him is that of George Meunier, a Belgian, who would seem from the "*Job*" cigarette poster to have been strongly inspired by Chéret. One notices the same composition, the same color-scheme and much the same general feeling as in the posters of the master, without, however, quite the unerring surety of line or abandoned poise of passing motion.



DIVAN JAPONAIS
HENRI DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC (1892)



YVETTE GUILBERT (A Sketch)
HENRI DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC



JEANNE D'ARC
EUGÈNE GRASSET
51

His work was *chic* and possessed strong poster values, its merit as a whole being impaired in no way except by comparison to that of Chéret.

One considers in the class of Meunier, the work of Lucien Métivet, whose posters, however, were unfortunately of very uneven merit. He was at his best in a series of posters for Eugénie Buffet, and in her appearance at the "*Concert de la Cigale*,"* he suggests no one less than Steinlen in his technique.

A. Cossard, whose poster for the "*Place Clichy*" is most interesting and strong in the simplicity of its composition and admirable in its bold technique and well-studied lettering, contributed a number of worthy examples, and the work of MM. Sinet and Grun deserves "honorable mention."

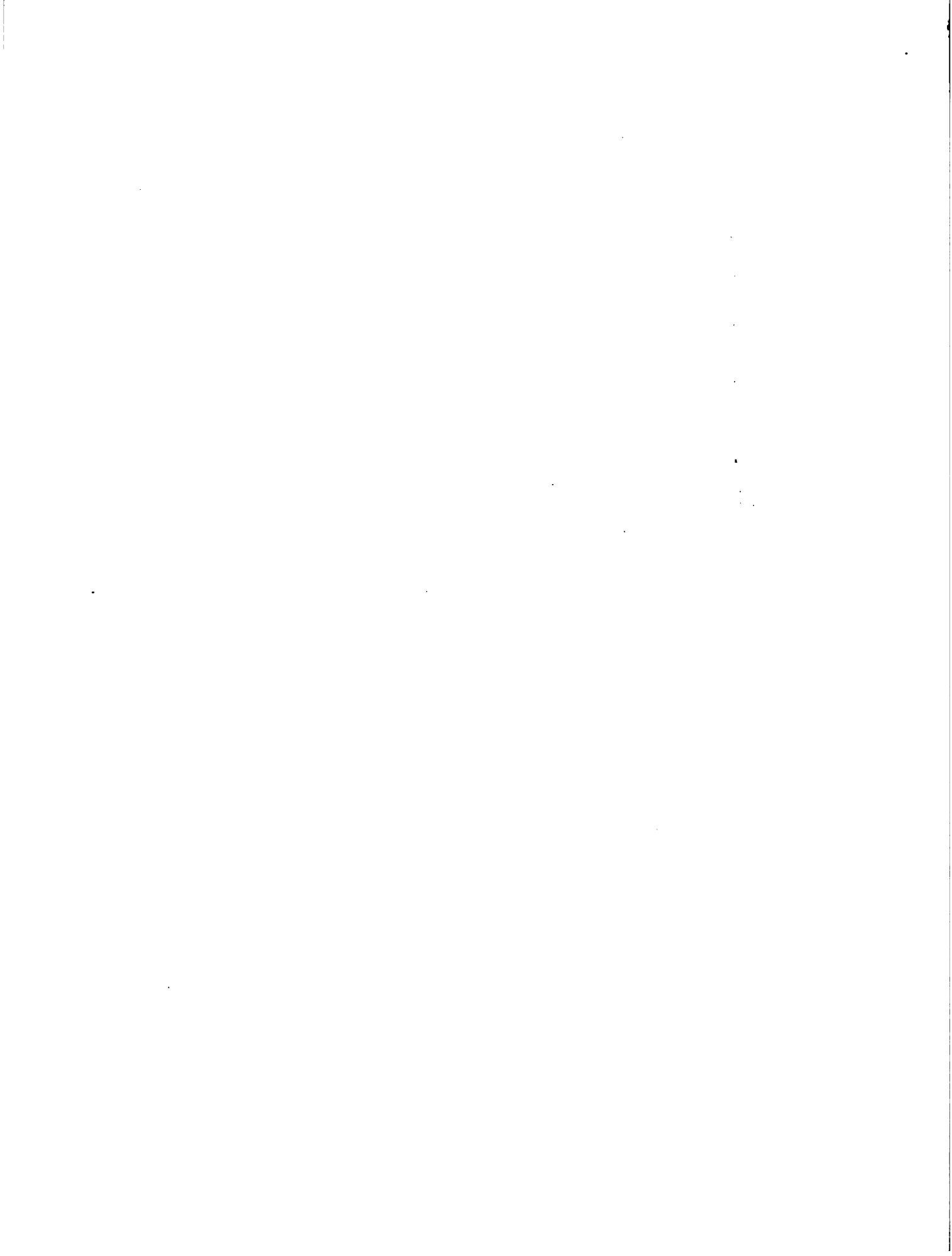
Of French designers who have chosen to expatriate themselves, the best known are Guillaume, Sinet and Grun, together with Prince Jean Paléologue (better known over his signature of "Pal") who, though a Roumanian by birth pursued all his studies in Paris. It was in 1893 that Paléologue went to Paris, and associated himself with a lithographer who soon became a rival of the establishments of Chaix and the "Atelier Jules Chéret." "Pal's" idea was to make drawings of a nature more commercial than those of Chéret, yet no less artistic. He was also the only designer at that time, except Chéret, who understood the technique of lithography, and was able to put his own touches on the stones. He came to the United States in 1900, and with the exception of short visits abroad, has worked here since that date, making many posters in this country, of which a sketch for "*Miss Valeska Suratt*," is perhaps the most successful. Apart from advertising work he showed an interesting departure in a series of ten charming poster-panels for the nursery, showing the adventures of a juvenile Pierrot, Columbine, and Harlequin.

* See Chapter VIII, page 361.



LA REVUE BLANCHE
PIERRE BONNARD (1894)

53





**JOB PAPIER
A CIGARETTES
GEORGE MEUNIER**

55



A LA PLACE CLICHY
A. COSSARD (1903)
57



PAUL M. POTTER'S
THE BELLE MUSICAL FARCE
OF THE **BOULEVARD** IN ONE ACT



VALESKA SURATT
JEAN PALÉOLOGUE (1910)
59

Willette's posters seem full of "the stuff that dreams are made of"—vague fantasies like his famous "Enfant Prodigue" poster. He seemed most fond of depicting Pierrot, in many moods and many rôles, and in this he would seem to have found an understudy in C. Léandre.

The English, although they made a noble effort to adopt the poster art, presented the idea in many extraordinary conceptions. "In England the London fogs somehow got entangled in the brush of the poster-maker, and the new art, in its translation from sunny France lost much of its joyous spirit," and Mr. Brander Matthews rather cynically observed that British posters depicted mostly "things to eat or soap."

Possibly the painting of "Bubbles," by Millais, bought by Messrs. Pears for use as an advertisement, suggested this rather sweeping and caustic observation, and it is fair to say that it can only be taken as a generality.

In 1871, appeared the first poster that decorated the walls of London. It was a curious creation, drawn by a Royal Academician, Frederick Walker, to advertise Wilkie Collins's book, "*The Woman in White*." This poster was in black and white, a statuesque figure of a woman standing with her hand on a half-opened door, looking back with a beautiful, terrified face from the star-studded night outside. It created no little sensation, and forerunner as it was, struck the keynote of the work to follow. This note, rather sombre and triste, has never been entirely shaken off, and has appeared with more or less strength in nearly all the posters of England.

Strongest of all in this marked passion for melancholy and weird effects in black and white was Aubrey Beardsley, that mad genius of "Yellow Book" fame, mercilessly ridiculed and caricatured in "Punch," and blindly followed by many less clever than he and less capable of mastering either his Mephistophelian conceptions or nightmare execution. He tortured the



*Engraved on wood
by W. H. Hooper*

THE WOMAN IN WHITE
FREDERICK WALKER (1871)

61

human figure in grotesque parodies, weird contortions—anything to gain a lurid and bizarre effect. He held that it was as permissible to conventionalize the human figure as to conventionalize plant forms for decorative purposes, and said: "If Nature doesn't conform to my drawings, so much the worse for Nature."

His influence on his generation was perhaps baneful, rather than advantageous, and pulled the English conception down to the depths of mournfulness and morbidity.

The light fantastic note of the French Poster was thus translated into an uncanny, grotesque thing, more than half tragic, and as different from the works of Chéret and Steinlen as night from day.

It was not until that master decorator, Walter Crane, appeared that anything like a sense of color was awakened in the English conception of a poster, and his gracefully drawn figures, softly colored in greens and yellows gladdened the sombre walls of London some little while. The only unfortunate phase of his work was the blind passion for vivid yellows which it engendered in contemporary art, and the exhibitions at Grosvenor Gallery became a mere scale of different values of saffron and lemon. Crane's work, however, was never mournful, and was always characterized by an indescribable grace of line and charm of feeling. His influence on his contemporaries was distinctly happy.

Of his immediate followers, perhaps the most noteworthy was R. Anning Bell, in whose work a distinct trace of the master is evident. One finds the same grace of line and charm of feeling with an additional element of a quality almost approaching grandeur. Bell's work is always dignified, often stately, and sometimes sublime in motive. The "*Liverpool Art-School*" poster suggests a stained glass window as much as anything else, and strikes, again, a note as utterly different from the work of Chéret, as it were possible to conceive.

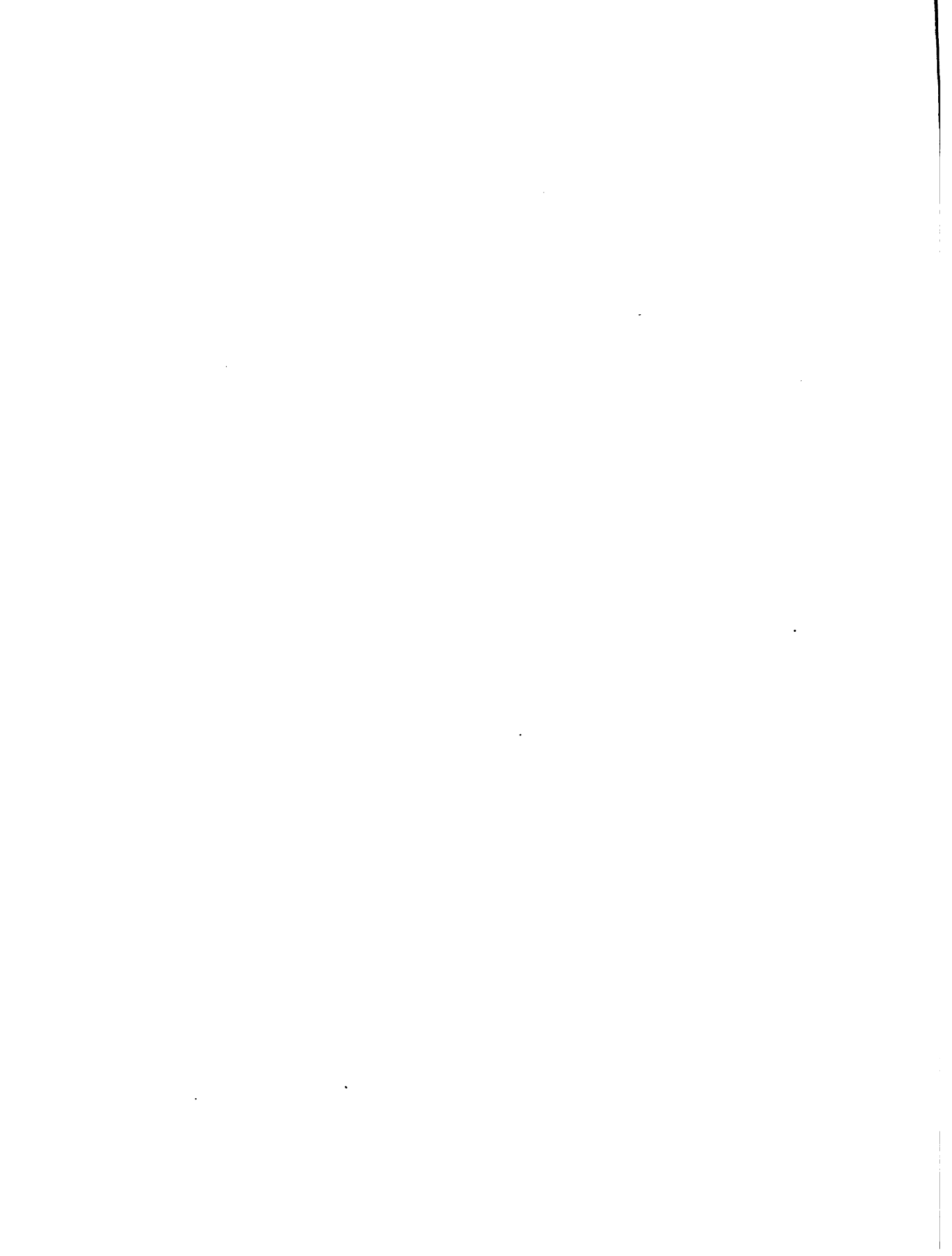


*Courtesy of
John Lane Company*

BODLEY HEAD
AUBREY BEARDSLEY (1894)
63



THE YELLOW BOOK
AUBREY BEARDSLEY
Courtesy of
John Lane Company
65



CITY OF
LIVERPOOL
SCHOOL OF
ARCHITECTURE AND APPLIED ART

CLASSES IN
ARCHITECTURE
MODELLING
PAINTING AND
DRAWING CARVING
IN WOOD
AND STONE ORNAMENTAL
WROUGHT IRON
WORK ETC ETC
FOR PARTICULARS
APPLY TO THE DIRECTOR

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

LIVERPOOL
ART SCHOOL
R. ANNING BELL
67



HAU & COMPANY CHAMPAGNE
WALTER CRANE (1900)
69

From the haughtily dignified figures of Anning Bell, English posters plunged once more into the depths of a greater mournfulness than ever, in the work of Pryde and Nicholson, who styled themselves the "Beggarstaff Brothers." Their posters embody many of the best points, being strong, simple, original, striking, and often bizarre; but utterly lacking in a relieving note of levity. They are grim and dispiriting, gloomy, sombre and cheerless. They have not the weird and grotesque properties of Beardsley's work, which offset in a measure certain other tendencies, and "The Beggarstaff's" posters have even caused a punning criticism to the effect that "they have the best claim in the world to be affixed to a 'dead wall.'" Of the same school is J. W. Simpson (whose "*Book of Book-Plates*," is thoroughly typical,) together with Gordon Craig, the work of both showing a strong "Beggarstaff" influence.

A much nearer approach to the Continental poster idea was reached in the work of Dudley Hardy, whose gay dancing silhouettes, white on a scarlet ground, did much to enliven the streets and, in the instance of his "*Gaiety Girl*" series, struck a note more nearly approaching the French than any previous work in England.

In marking a departure from the grim and melancholy, Hardy's work was undoubtedly the forerunner of such amusing recent posters as J. Hassall's "*Follies*," which set everyone in gales of laughter, and was hailed by the "Tatler" as the funniest poster ever seen in London. Of this cheerful school of drollery is also Cecil Aldin, whose nursery posters, as well as those of Hassall, have charmed and delighted two continents. Aldin executed an uncommonly clever poster advertising "Colman's Blue," while Hassall made two others for the same company, for "Starch" and "Mustard." Comment should also be made upon the work of Tom Browne, Charles Pears and Will Owen, whose style, as a clique, is admirably displayed in Owen's naïve little poster for "*Lux*" soap.



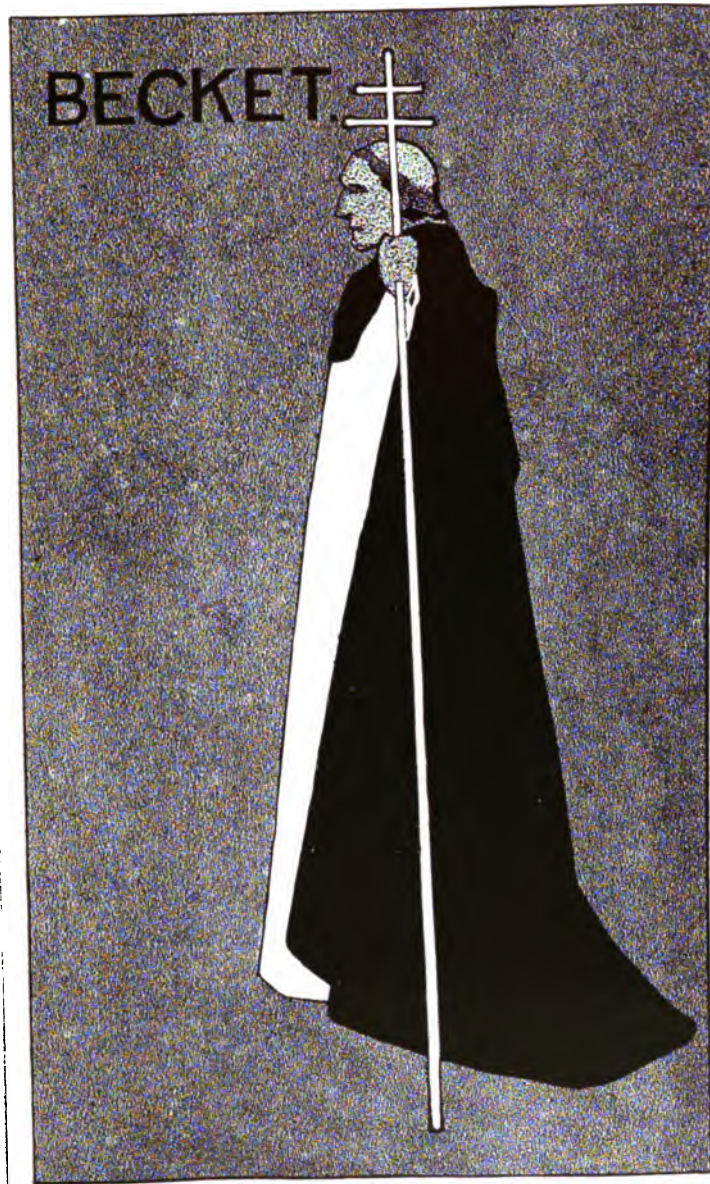
DON QUIXOTE
"BEGGARSTAFF BROTHERS" (1895)
71

Thus the high water-mark of poster work was reached in England by Dudley Hardy, coupled in success with Maurice Greiffenhagen who, like Chéret, almost invariably chose a girl as his motive, and drew refined and charming women with a dashing technique of line, mass, and color. His style is admirably suggested in all but color in the "*Pall Mall*" poster which for strength of composition and simplicity of motive equals anything produced in France.

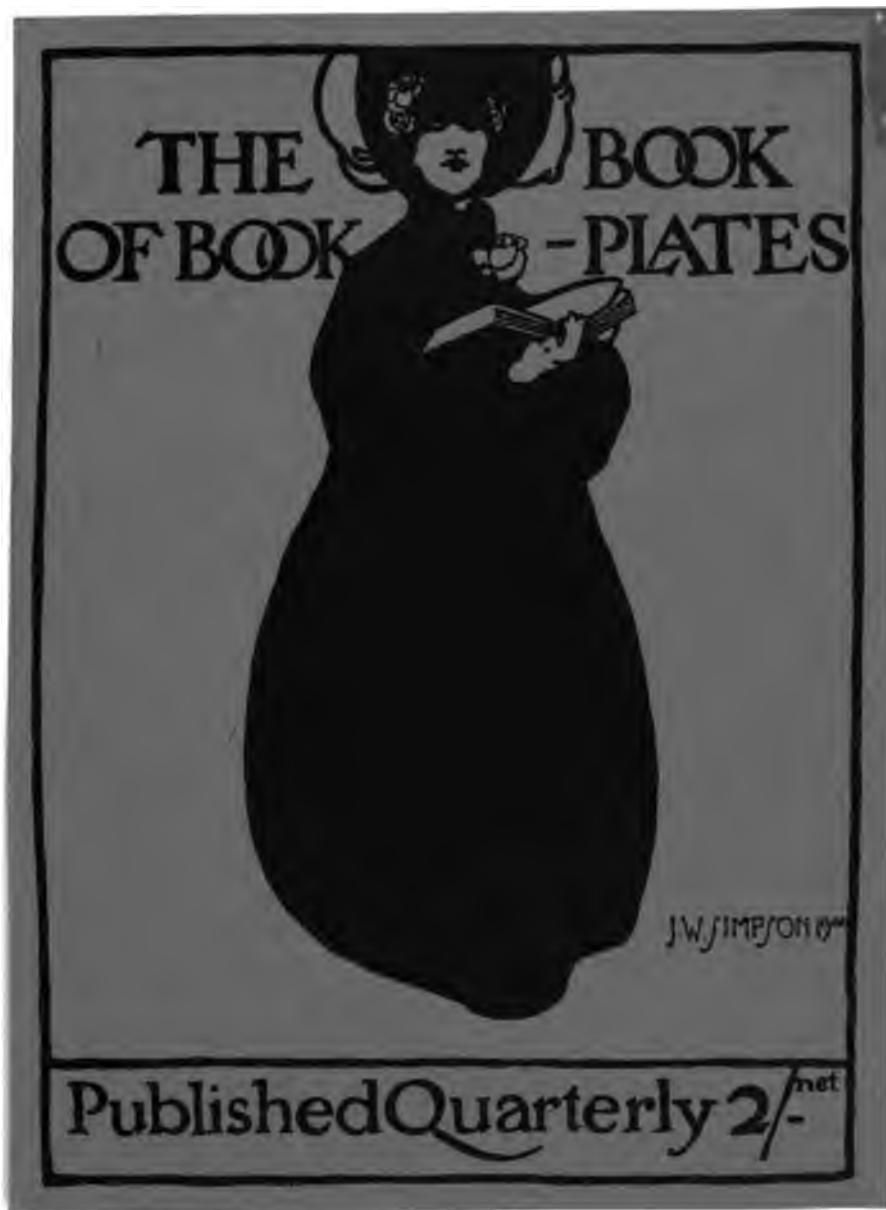
Among successful essayists of the poster in England were many of the staff of "Punch"; Bernard Partridge and Phil May being respectively exponents of the sublime and the ridiculous in motive, while Raven-Hill gladdened the "hoardings" with many lively and piquant sheets for "Pick-me-Up."

Prominent among English painters who have entered the poster field from time to time is Frank Brangwyn, whose magnificent poster for the Orient-Pacific Steamship Line is familiar to all collectors, and which one would illustrate in this chapter were it not that its pictorial qualities outweigh its poster values. If it were not so splendid a picture one would regret its deficiencies in certain respects as a poster, though its wonderful color and great strength of composition go far to off-set these, and to raise it certainly to a presentation of excellent advertising power.

Of recent years there has been founded in England an institution of which a counterpart might well be considered in this country. This is the Poster Academy—the first part of its name designating its field, and the second dignifying that field with a name generally associated with the better-known Fine Arts. When the designing of posters becomes generally recognized as a Fine Art, we may confidently look for an array of pleasing and interesting sheets on our boards, and the disappearance of much of the lithographic trash of to-day. The object of this English club is "to convince the advertiser that the artistic poster is more effective than the inar-



BECKET
"BEGGARSTAFF BROTHERS"



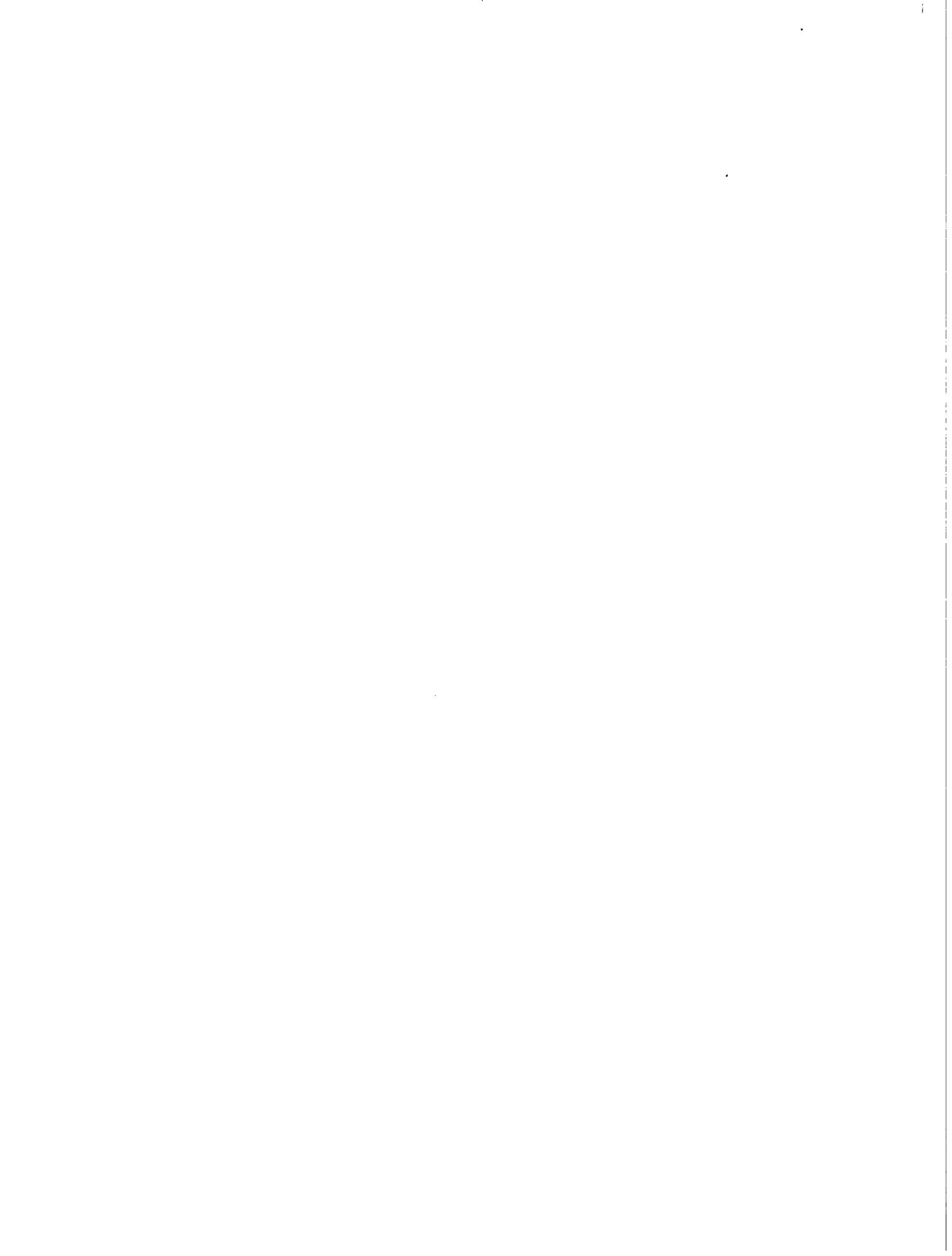
THE BOOK OF BOOKPLATES
J. W. SIMPSON (1900)
75

T



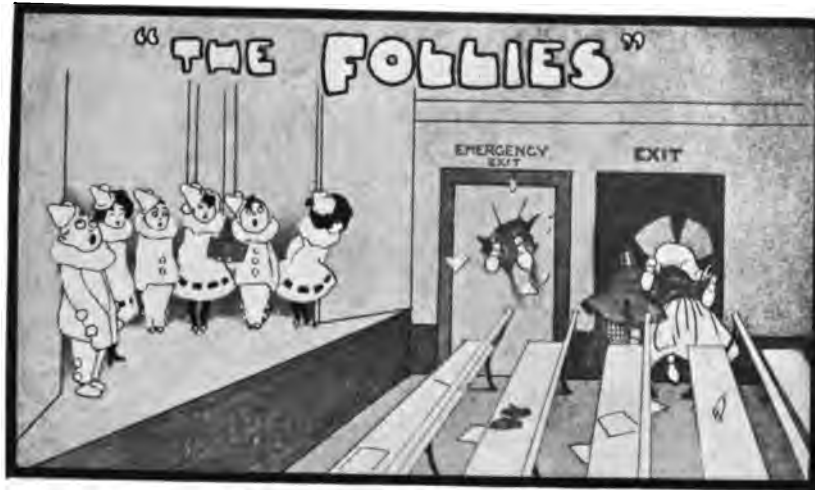
*Courtesy of
John Lane Company*

THE MASQUE OF LOVE
GORDON CRAIG (1901)





A GAIETY GIRL
DUDLEY HARDY (1894)
79



THE FOLLIES
J. HASSALL (1905)

LUX SOAP
WILL OWEN
81





PALL MALL BUDGET
MAURICE GREIFFENHAGEN
83



*Courtesy of and Copyrighted by
The Sudan Government Railways
and Steamers*

SUDAN
R. T. ROUSSEL
85

tistic one"—certainly an excellent movement in the right direction. In England there is a "National Society for Checking the Abuses of Public Advertising," and it has even been suggested that this and the Poster Academy should work in unison. The Academy, however, has held several exhibitions independently, where much interesting work was exhibited by such designers as Aldin, Hassall, Hardy, Browne, and Pryde (of the "Beggars-staff Brothers"). Some definite association of this kind, comprised of men working in commercial art in this country, and holding frequent exhibitions, could not fail to bring about not only better individual work but a more intelligent general public recognition.

Among English posters, those for steamship companies, and for travel in general have been among the best. In many cases these have been done by other than English artists, as in the "*Sudan*" poster by R. T. Roussel—though Frank Brangwyn's "Orient-Pacific" steamship poster will always remain one of the finest in the world.

The most noteworthy recent poster work in England is unquestionably to be found in the numerous posters advertising out-of-town trips by trains or omnibus. These are not only highly artistic in execution, but suggest, from the advertising point of view, an excellent means of stimulating traffic. "*St. Alban's Route*" is charming in composition and color scheme, and cleverly rendered, and the market figures in "*Watford*" are painted in an unusually vigorous and colorful poster technique. "*Twickenham*" and "*Waltham Abbey*" show a breadth in the handling of pictorial landscapes which affords good material for the study of this particular poster problem.

One man is largely responsible as the influence that created these travel posters which form such a distinguished addition to English poster art—Mr. Frank Pick, the advertising manager of the London Underground Railways.

ST ALBANS ROUTE

EVERY
84
DAY



*Courtesy of
London Underground Railways Company*

**ST. ALBANS ROUTE
F. GREGORY BROWN**



*Courtesy of
London Underground Railways Company*

WATFORD
E. A. Cox
89





DAILY HERALD POSTER
E. MCKNIGHT KAUFFER (1918)
91

In connection with London Underground Railways Posters E. McKnight Kauffer should be mentioned. Although an American, all his poster work has been done in England. In addition to his motor omnibus posters, which are excellent, he has recently been making some strikingly "modernistic" posters for various purposes, very unusual in their treatment, and interesting.

One of the larger London stores, Derry & Toms, has produced a number of striking posters, four of which are illustrated. They are all simple in idea, broad in treatment and vigorous and vivid in color. E. & A. Mele & Ci., in Naples, and La Place Clichy in Paris are Continental counterparts of Derry & Toms in the matter of issuing large series of posters, and while several of our larger stores in this country use posters occasionally, notably Wanamaker's, Gimbel's and Macy's, they have not produced many noteworthy examples.

Reverting to English travel posters, nearly all of which are landscapes, some observations on landscape posters might well be made. Lacking action, and the "human equation" of the figure, the whole burden of attracting and sustaining interest falls upon composition, color and technique. The landscape poster must be as bold as possible in its composition, avoiding the complexities which would be involved in a literal rendering of the subject—must eliminate much of the actual *picture* and concentrate on the *impression*. The color scheme should be vivid and definite and at the same time harmonious, and the technique, preferably, should develop some interesting and unusual characteristics. The manner in which a landscape poster is done is very important, because of the necessarily complicated perspective and the different distances, or picture planes, which every landscape naturally presents. To secure a large and simple effect in a composition involving foreground, middle distance and far distance is no small task for the poster artist to set himself.

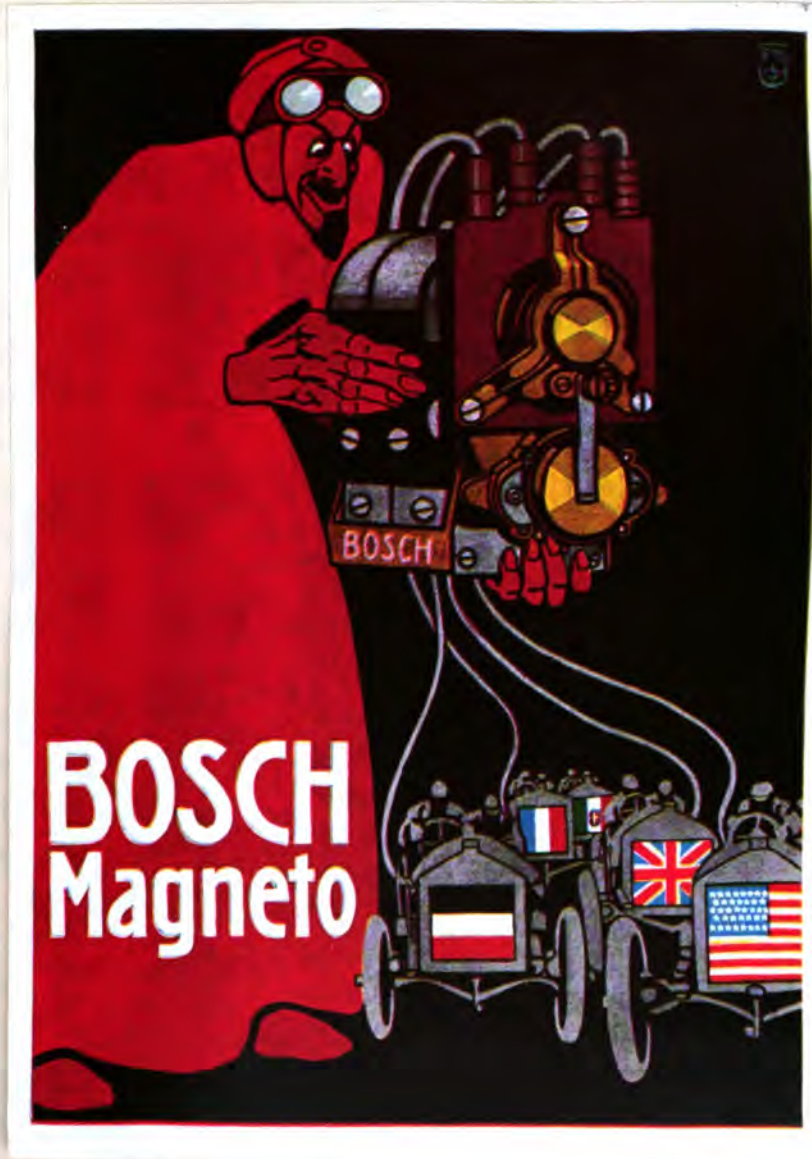


*Courtesy of and
Copyrighted by
Derry & Toms*

**DERRY AND TOMS POSTERS
F. A. WARREN, HELEN BYRNE
BRYCE and F. GREGORY BROWN**

Long after the wave of poster-making in France had reached its height, and the art had settled down as an established profession, Germany took it up with a characteristic grimness of determination that produced so many interesting and excellent posters that an entire book might be written about the German *plakat*. No names like those of Chéret or Mucha were prominent at first—it was more an “all-comers event,” and every artist, illustrator, and student took a tilt at it. “Simplicissimus” and “Jugend” blossomed forth regularly with covers which were designed along the lines of posters, some of them very excellent; and railroads and expositions decorated the streets with some striking and attractive bits of color. There would seem at the first to have been no leader in the movement—no school, and perhaps too great a striving after originality. That originality may be too dearly bought was clear in the work of Beardsley in England, and the realization of some limit to the exploitation of the grotesque would have been the needed bit of leaven in German posters. Gradually, however, certain designers came to the front, until to-day Ludwig Hohlwein has won an international reputation. The posters for riding clothes are admirable examples of his work, and more particularly the clever advertisement for a store for children’s apparel.

Numerous characteristically German posters over the group-signature “P. K. S.,” show, however, a more noticeable and far keener tendency toward the grotesque. The “advertising value” of the work of this “P. K. S.” is of a different sort, but of equal strength compared to the values in Hohlwein’s posters. The one is bizarre, weird, astonishing—the other a presentation of the actual article in our very midst, and in its most attractive guise. The “story” in the “P. K. S.” “*Bosch Magneto*” poster is excellent in its simplicity and legibility, implying as it does, that the motor cars of all nationalities needs must be wired up to this particular magneto, while the gigantic and diabolical chauffeur, Mephisto or Me-



BOSCH MAGNETO
" P. K. S."
95

chanic, or both—in his vermilion cloak, forms the note that attracts the attention at the first glance. The “story” in Hohlwein’s posters is even simpler, and is, indeed, the literal complement of the legend, with the interest more dependent upon skillful and clever draughtsmanship.

In Belgium several clever designers have appeared, such as Meunier, and, later, Privat-Livemont, though most prominent of the Belgians will always be H. Cassiers, to whom may be credited a great quantity of very interesting work. Perhaps the most successful of the posters of Cassiers is the “*American Line*,” in which the “story” is unusually legible. The figures seem almost to speak, and the attention is directed without the slightest deflection to the ocean greyhound, while from a technical viewpoint it will be found to possess extraordinarily strong poster-values in every particular. The “*Red Star Line*” poster is of equal charm though less strength, and these two sheets would place Cassiers in an enviable position as a poster designer, even without the legions of other excellent work to his name, such as the “Ostend-Dover” steamship advertisement, which many consider his best.

The Scandanavian countries, especially Sweden, are producing some interesting and peculiarly individual work. It is unfortunate that it is not more extensively seen in this country. The poster for the “*Scandinavian Art Exhibition*,” by Gunnar Hallström is as extraordinary in color as it is in design. In deep purples, blues and greens, a Viking ship, with starry sail and carved dragon prow, appears over the crest of a wave. On the score of what advertising men call “comprehension value,” or the instantaneously understandable value of a poster drawing, this example would certainly not stand high. In color and in decorative value, however, it is a distinguished piece of work and an essentially artistic poster.



HERMANN SCHERRER, Tailor
LUDWIG HOHLWEIN
97



HERMANN SCHERRER, Tailor
LUDWIG HOHLWEIN
99



4



BOLL'S KINDERGARDEROBE
LUDWIG HOHLWEIN
101



BEITU.CO



FARBEN
FABRIKEN
HAMBURG

"SNOW FANTASY"
GEORG TIPPEL

103



*Courtesy of
The American Line*

**AMERICAN LINE
H. CASSIERS**

105



*Courtesy of
The Red Star Line*

**RED STAR LINE
H. CASSIERS**

107

SCANDINAVIAN
ART·EXHIBITION



GUNNAR HALLSTRÖM

NEW·YORK·BUFFALO·TOLEDO
CHICAGO·BOSTON
1912 - 1913

SCANDINAVIAN ART EXHIBITION
GUNNAR HALLSTRÖM (1912)

In Italy, even among a host of brilliant poster artists, one master stands out like Chéret in France—the great A. Hohenstein, whose work may be broadly characterized by superb draughtsmanship and the finest modelling, the latter being effected by intensive lighting. One of Hohenstein's finest posters was made for "Tosca," and other excellent examples are those for an "Esposizione d' Igiene," "La Sera" (newspaper) and two for "Monte Carlo." Alphonse Mucha is one of the few poster artists whose draughtsmanship can be compared with that of Hohenstein.

The most essentially *artistic* posters of Italy, and perhaps of the whole world of posters are those of Giuseppe Palanti, whose "Giovanni Frangipani," and posters for Verdi, Mascagni and Wagner operas are known and prized by all collectors.

Three other poster designers who would be included in the "first five" of Italy are N. Dudovitch, G. M. Mataloni and L. Metlicovitz. Important Metlicovitz posters are "Conchita," "La Sera" and "Turin Exposition of 1911," while his "*Milan International Exposition*" (1906), featuring the opening of the great Simplon Tunnel, is perhaps his masterpiece. It is, in fact, one of the most brilliant and imaginative posters produced by any European artist. Mercury, God of Travel, and an allegorical figure, presumably the "Spirit of Progress" are seated on the pilot of an engine, their backs illumined by the headlight, and their gaze fixed ahead upon a vista of the plain of Italy, seen through the tunnel's mouth. An admirable illustration of "telling a story" by means of a poster—idea and execution strongly co-ordinated.

The poster roll of Italy should include, in addition to the five men mentioned above, N. Mauzan, L. Caldanzano, M. Mazza, A. Terzi, D. Cambellotti, A. Magrini and G. Chini, all of whom have produced admirable posters, full of strength and imagination.

Mention should also be made of the enterprise of the store of E.



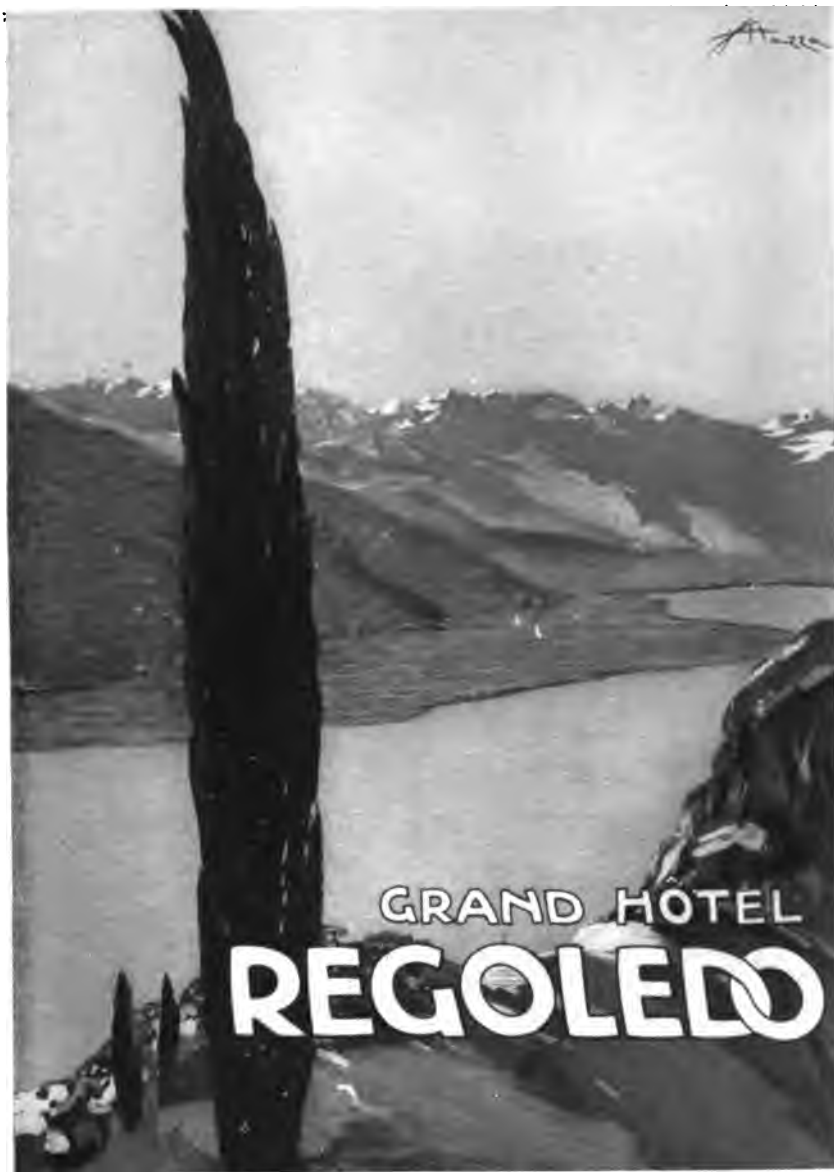
BIANCHI AUTOMOBILE
ANONYMOUS
III



ESPOSIZIONE INTERNAZIONALE
L. METLICOVITZ (1906)



I. BUFFONI
L. METLICOVITZ
115



GRAND HOTEL REGOLEDO
M. MAZZA
117

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

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21

22



MONACO EXPOSITION ET CONCOURS
DE CANOTS AUTOMOBILES
A. HOHENSTEIN

119

& A. Mele & Ci., of Naples, who commissioned the following artists, and several others, to make posters: M. Dudovitch, L. Cappiello, A. Villa, L. Metlicovitz, F. Laskoff, A. Terzi and E. Sacchetti.

Many posters have been produced in Italy by railroads, hotels and tourist agencies, the "*Grand Hotel, Regoledo*" being typical of the better of these. The Italian poster in general can be characterized as showing a high order of imagination, good sense of color, good grasp of simple, dominant idea, and clever, unusual, but generally highly legible lettering. And the posters of Hohenstein, Palanti, Mataloni and Metlicovitz show a fine quality of true art in composition, color and technique.

The observation that posters were produced for many years in Italy only by railroads and tourist agencies might also be made of Switzerland, and though this country is the birthplace of the great Steinlen, of French fame, the art of the *affiche* was not recognized to any marked degree until the organization, in 1899, of the "Société Suisse d'Affiches Artistiques," in Geneva. Its object is not unlike that of the English "Poster Academy," and it is composed of a clique of artists, exclusively Swiss, who have attained prominence or are working along these lines, and who share the profits of the work done. Most prominent of its designing members are M. G. Viollier and M. Benderly ("Ben").

For many years Spain presented nothing but the crude and garish lithographs, or mere lettered bulletins of the bull-fights—oddly enough, the Latin mind in this most curious of all Latin races, did not until very recently find expression in the elusive medium of the poster, which struck so keenly the keynote of all the national characteristics of the French. Perhaps Ramon Casas, with his many posters of Spanish dancers was the best, and there were also J. Xandaró, M. Utrillo and A. de Riquer—all capable

BERNER OBERLAND



WINTERSPORT

BERNER OBERLAND WINTERSPORT
C. PELLEGRINI

121

poster designers. Certainly the country which can produce poster design of such merit as the book cover for "*En Flandes sa Puesta el Sol*," by "Marco" is distinctly to be reckoned with, and can be regarded as a source for much inspirational material. In pure poster technique the example illustrated is admirable, and in its suggestion of a great marching army, by means chiefly of the forest of lances, the artist has cleverly utilized the same device that Velasquez used in "The Surrender of Breda." And with this army as a decorative background, the figure of the man in the red cloak stands out with a fine poster quality that is fairly epic.

Recent art-movements in Holland have taken up the poster officially, and certainly the racial characteristics are by no means attuned to the frivolous audacity of street placards. The various societies of municipal art, indeed, have abolished most of the city bill-boards, so that work in the vein of poster has perforce confined itself largely to book and circular covers.

Hungary has essayed the poster by no means unsuccessfully, and can name, among others, I. de Vaszary, John Petridesz, Francis Helking and Arpad Basch. National characteristics, however, have not been marked, except in the lettering. Basch shows strongly the influence of Mucha in the delicacy and grace of his figures and details.

In Russia, the genius of an extraordinary people did not express itself in posters until within the last ten years, when the talent of Léon Bakst and a clique of fellow designers began to produce some clever work.

Of recent years the work of Léon Bakst is an expression of the movement set afoot by Wronbel, who died in 1910. The painters directly influenced by Wronbel, who conceived a peculiarly original treatment of

EDVARDO MARQVINA
EN FLANDES SE HA
PUESTO EL SOL



EN FLANDES SE HA PUESTO EL SOL

MARCO

123

theatrical values, belonged to two schools, the school of Moscow and that of St. Petersburg. The most astonishing of these painters among whom were Alexandre Benois, Rœrich and Victor Serow, is Léon Bakst. Born in St. Petersburg in 1868, he studied at the School of Beaux Arts in that city, after which he worked in Paris with a Finnish painter, Albert Edelfelt.

His genius has been recognized in Paris by the title of Chevalier of the Legion of Honor which was conferred upon him, and he attracted much attention in 1911 by the stage settings and costumes which he designed for the Russian Ballets. Of these the illustration is taken from the "*Programme Officiel*," and shows the remarkable quality of his draughtsmanship. In his use of color he suggests certain Oriental work which one has seen—especially Persian and East Indian painting.

With the tension of the war, and its often rather frenzied posters, gradually receding into the past; many artists in the Southern European countries are beginning to produce. These countries, such as Czecho-Slovakia, Roumania, and the others, with newly awakened nationalism, and a newly defined identity, will be heard from in the matter of posters in a few years. It would be premature to attempt, at this time to predict the place these will attain, or to attempt to guess their characteristics. There is much talent, certainly, in Southern Europe, and much new incentive toward new creative work.

Russia touches upon the Orient—ancient, complex and intangible in art as in all things else. In Japan, there were theatrical posters in the 13th century—in China at a period far earlier. In the present volume these facts are submitted only as matters of historical interest, and one illustration is presented, showing a theatrical poster which was designed, printed and displayed in Japan, and is simply a portrait of a contemporary

PROGRAMME OFFICIEL
DES
BALLETS RUSSES



PROGRAMME OFFICIEL DES BALLETS RUSSES
LÉON BAKST (1911)
125

stage favorite, by Toyokuni. It goes without saying that the Japanese are born poster-makers. Their slightest sketch of a wild duck slanting across the sky, a heron in the reeds, or the distant apex of Fuji—all are free in color and delineation, and their position on the sheet or page on which they appear gives them a strong unbalanced composition. But these matters involve a basic exposition of Oriental art—a matter as subtle and intricate as the Orient itself, and a subject on which a superficial criticism can do no more than stimulate individual study and analysis of Japanese prints in particular and all Japanese art in general from the point of view of the poster student.

This chapter has been designed to briefly cover the poster work of France, England, and the Continent in general, a field obviously too large for thorough presentation in one chapter, and suggesting to the writer an entire future volume. Brief, however, as this survey of European posters has necessarily been, it will serve to form a background as it were, upon which to throw accurate and intelligent critical analyses of American posters.



JAPANESE THEATRICAL POSTER
TOYÓKUNI

127

CHAPTER IV.

American Posters.

Considering first the mental attitude of the American people in regard to this poster art, one will concede in a moment that the idea should have fallen on fertile soil. The birthright of the American is freedom from precedent, rules, and traditions—in art as in all things else; his accredited characteristic, native wit—spontaneous and apt; and his tastes admirably attuned to out-door art and the necessary audacity of the poster.

Strangely enough, however, poster work was taken up in America in a way more characteristically far-sighted than artistic. The American devoted his energies in the matter almost entirely to the mechanical side—to processes of reproduction rather than to the artistic consideration of what he was producing. He seized the idea of making posters with the avidity and nervous intensity invariably displayed upon his importation or invention of anything new, but he did not seem to know what to do with it for many years.

The first American posters were woodcuts, often very elaborate, and the art of printing large wooden color blocks was perfected to the exclusion of any thought as to the design involved. Of this art, the old-time circus-poster is a fair example, and while sometimes pleasing, it cannot be taken seriously; and verges upon the impossible when considered in any connection with tenets of abstract art. Not only were the most fundamental principles of poster design, as such, ignored, but the principles of design of any kind seem to have formed no part of these first essays in a new field.

With the advent of lithography and the possibilities of reproduction from stone, a fresh interest in posters made itself felt throughout the land, but, as before, interest in art was entirely sacrificed to interest in mechanical processes.

Lithography was developed to a high degree of technical excellence, while the subjects reproduced were hopelessly commonplace, banal, and even at times vulgar.

Fences and walls flamed with elaborate sheets advertising contemporary theatrical productions, but all were presented in a manner deadeningly literal and thoroughly hopeless in point of conception and design. So depressing, indeed, were these efforts, that one refuses to resuscitate even a single specimen for illustration. Since the present discussion deals rather with analysis of design than with a history of progress in mechanical reproduction, the posters of the "Stone Age" may be said to be utterly unsuccessful, as such, no matter how much the presentation of the art may subsequently have benefitted from the patient and capable efforts of those early engravers.

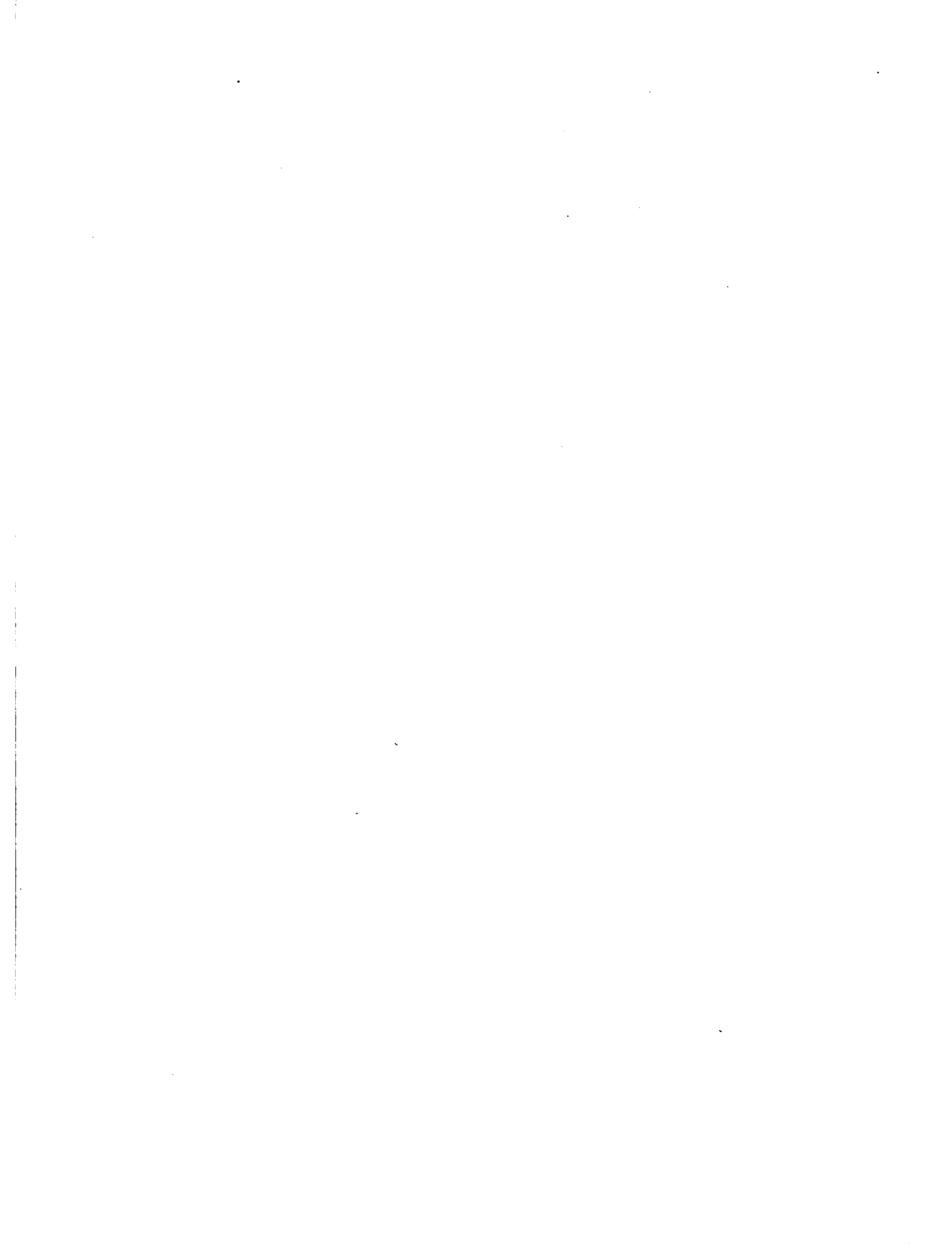
Some of the larger publishing houses (notably Harper's) were the first to exploit real posters in America, and with the genius of Edward Penfield and Will Bradley as the moving spirit, posters took on a new life and began to hold a new meaning for the public mind. People watched for these quaint and dashing conceits, for Mr. Penfield has always combined a certain Parisian *chic* with a London poise of aristocracy and refinement, and blended the two by some curious psychological sleight of hand into an expression of the best that is in America. His girls, though often homely, were plainly refined, and always interesting. His young men were ascetic of feature and informal of raiment, but always well-bred and well-mannered. They drove in hansoms, or walked briskly across country with their dogs, or faced a raw fall wind on the golf links. They all had a cer-



*Courtesy of
The Chicago Tribune*

**CHICAGO SUNDAY TRIBUNE
WILL H. BRADLEY (1894)**

131



The Chap-Book



Being A MISCELLANY of Curious and Interesting Songs
Ballads, Tales, Histories, &c.; adorned with a variety
of pictures and very delightful to read; *newly*
composed by MANY CELEBRATED WRITERS. To
which are annex'd a LARGE COLLECTION of No
tices of BOOKS * * * * *

CHAP BOOK
WILL H. BRADLEY (1895)
133



THE ECHO (August, 1895) WILL H. BRADLEY

tain character of their own, these poster-people of Mr. Penfield's mind, and most important, awoke in the American public a taste for better things.

In his "*Poster Calendar, 1897*" is to be seen perhaps an example of the very best of Mr. Penfield's earlier work. Excellent in composition, color, line and simplicity of action, it seems strongly imbued with the influence of Steinlen—even to the introduction of the cat, a note of charm in this design which gives it a place of its own among American posters. It embodies, indeed, all the essentials of excellence in poster design, which may briefly be capitulated in order to prove beyond any doubt its claim to being one of the very best of all our posters, past or present—and, indeed, it were difficult to imagine any future sheet which could challenge its place.

Its "action" and "story" are not only simple, but are placed in the foreground, with no disturbing elements. Even the cat is demurely subordinate. There are no masses of small, confusing and irrelevant letters—the story is again simple, and the stronger for that. Further, the letters are essentially a part of the poster, not only in relative scale but in actual incorporation—a point as excellent as it is rare and difficult of attainment. One might wield the scissors in vain to separate the picture and the legend. Nor is the whole muddled with ill-studied attempts to produce unnecessary impressions of shade and shadow. The poster did not need any such simulations of reality, being in itself saliently sincere, while the entire thing is enveloped with that rare poster-requisite—the direct appeal to the senses, without the tax of study and decipherment. "*The Poster Calendar*" could be hung beside Steinlen's "*Lait pur de la Vingeanne*."

And Will H. Bradley put forth many posters in black and white, for the "*Chap-Book*," and contemporary books and periodicals—posters which were called "artistic" or "clever" by those who liked them, and "good" by those who understood them.

In many ways it was a period of artistic convulsion in this country,



VICTOR BICYCLES
WILL H. BRADLEY (1895)
Copyrighted by
The Overman Wheel Company

those years from 1892 onward almost to 1900—certainly to 1898. "The Yellow Book" became a fad—people talked intelligently about "William Morris," and the "Craftsman Idea." The baneful influence due to an almost general misunderstanding of the teachings of Ruskin had largely died out, "Eastlakin" architecture was tottering to its grave, together with that frantic impulse to misapply the "Japanesque" in every conceivable form of decoration. Everyone was thinking new thoughts, evolving new conceptions of art and waking up to the idea that precedent should be studied rather than followed, and that there are more fish in the sea than were ever taken out of it.

So, close upon the heels of Mr. Penfield (of whom more later), came Will Bradley, Frank Hazenplug, Claude Fayette Bragdon, W. Carqueville, J. J. Gould, E. B. Bird, Ernest Haskell, George Wharton Edwards, H. Sayen and many other designers and illustrators who entered the lists of "posterists."

Of these, as can be seen, Will Bradley was strongly inspired by the work of Aubrey Beardsley in England, and his black and white shows clever massing, and a pleasing grace of line governed by a much greater restraint in feeling than ever appeared in Beardsley's drawings. One must not underestimate the value of the impetus to originality and art in this kind of work which Mr. Bradley's numerous posters created at this very critical juncture.

They showed many strong points which place them high in the ranks of American posters. The lettering was always adequate, in mass and relative scale (a point of superiority over Beardsley), the conceptions were quaint and original, and any abandon lacking in their composition was more than made up for by their strong *decorative* qualities, the cleverness of the whole carrying even the possible over-finesse of detail—their only fault as posters. The "*Victor Bicycle*" poster is at once characteristic and excellent,



Published by
R.H. Russell & Son
NEW YORK

*Courtesy of
R. H. Russell, Esq.*

POSTER CALENDAR
EDWARD PENFIELD (1897)

139

and is among the best of American work, even taking into consideration the mass of varied and interesting designs by the men of today.

Frank Hazenplug—whose work is admirably illustrated in the "*Chap-Book*" poster—was also of this school, and it would seem from his work that he had tried to combine such strength and cleverness as undoubtedly characterize Beardsley, with even a greater grace and originality than Will Bradley.

Carqueville, however, followed the feeling and technique of Penfield's posters to a marked degree, though with results less successful in point of strength or lasting qualities. Perhaps his cleverest production is the "*Lippincott*" poster. It illustrates to some extent the poster-value of "suggestive proportion"—of expressing an *idea* considerably larger than the sheet itself, in which it is not at all unlike many cover designs of "Jugend."

Among those who had attained high prominence in poster work at that time was Louis Rhead, an Englishman, who came to America in 1882. His work at this period showed a great deal of delicacy, with strong decorative tendencies. From the standpoint of the poster collector one regrets his total desertion of this sort of work, exquisite as are his recent charming pen-drawings.

The work of Ernest Haskell at this time (1896) differs entirely from his present style, as does that of J. J. Gould. Bird was more or less of the school of Beardsley, but Edwards adhered to classic and allegorical motives consistently.

Much more varied and to be considered later, is the intensely interesting work of Maxfield Parrish, Robert J. Wildhack, the Leyendecker Brothers, Louis Fancher, George Brehm and Adolph Treidler.

Since the day that the poster was made a popular fad by Penfield, the book-stores and magazine stands have displayed hundreds of posters, good, bad and indifferent, of which a detailed and indiscriminate considera-



CHAP BOOK
FRANK HAZENPLUG
141

tion would be both tedious and unprofitable. Within the last few years, however, some of these posters have been distinctly interesting and instructive, and of sufficient individuality to demand serious consideration.

While gigantic strides were being taken by the publishing houses, the theatres, with certain exceptions as excellent and commendable as they are rare, were slow to follow the movement, and have continued to ignore even such forceful object lessons as the posters of M. Chéret.

The theatrical poster in this country has only in a few isolated instances come up to the obvious dramatic possibilities of the subjects available. Hamilton King, about 1905, made a strong effort to inject some spirit into American theatrical posters, but became discouraged at the lack of appreciation shown by the managers. Hy Mayer made several brilliant posters for Mr. Ziegfeld, who, in the earlier days of the "Follies," and some other productions, seemed to vision some dramatic poster possibilities, but the work of King and Mayer exerted no lasting influence, and theatrical posters continued to compete chiefly in stupidity.

For a time there was a vogue for portrait posters, many of which were merely developed from enlarged photographs, with borders and lettering. Far more interesting and significant were such portrait heads as the "*Maude Adams*" by Blendon Campbell, a strong *sanguine* head of Mme. Nazimova by Ivanowski, and several heads by Ernest Haskell.

The exceptional American theatrical poster was the great twenty-four sheet for "*Sumurun*" by Louis Fancher, in 1913, a brilliant piece of color and delineation, not equalled before or since in the theatrical field in this country.

The rise of the motion picture has opened a new field akin to that of the stage, and one in which the producers do not seem to be so unenterprising as the theatrical managers. In proportion to the total number of large and expensive film productions, the number of good motion picture



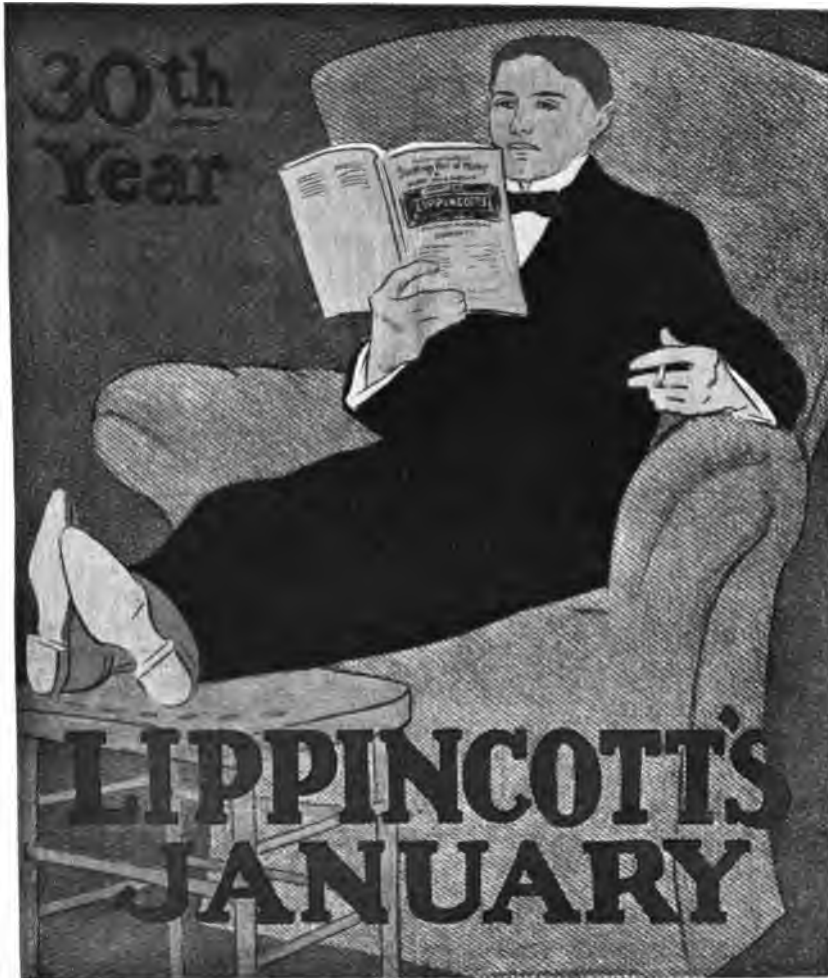
**CENTURY
MAGAZINE
POSTER**

June, 1897

LOUIS RHEAD

*Courtesy of and
Copyrighted by the
Century Company*





*Courtesy of
Lippincott's Magazine*

LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE POSTER

January, 1898

J. J. GOULD

145

posters is however deplorably small. In this field the names of Henry Clive and C. V. Millard should be chronicled.

Maxfield Parrish, whom we must always thank for producing one of the most thoroughly charming of American posters "*Century, Midsummer 1897*," is ever original, bizarre, and rich in conception. One of his many characteristics is a love of detail (at the expense of poster-efficiency), with a quaintly elaborate, almost over-studied, technique. He revels in intricate plays of light, shade, and shadow, and in the production of even, though interesting, textures with occasional gently graded tones. His lettering, sometimes bold and sometimes subordinate, is always legible. Compared, in point of poster value, with Chéret, it might be said that his work lacks strength through too much *finesse*, and that none of his posters could attract attention across a street.

Within recent years Parrish has made several drawings for display advertising which are among the finest achievements in advertising in this country. This work consisted of a window-card for "Djer-Kiss" powder, also largely used in full color in the magazines, three twenty-four sheet posters for "Fisk Tires" and four superb paintings for the "*Edison Mazda Lamp*," used primarily as calendars (masterpieces of fine lithography), and incidentally in magazine color pages. The most recent is a twenty-four sheet for "Hire's Root Beer," from which the use of one individual figure is more effective than the poster as a whole. There are also two posters for "Ferry's Seeds."

J. C. Leyendecker attracts, delights, and stimulates by his now famous free and dashing technique, which possesses all the abandon but none of the disregard for detail that characterizes the impressionist. His work has the appearance of having been once drawn, and never "touched up" or tampered with after it has been put on the canvas. This gives it a frank character all its own, and seems a dare to "Take it or leave it



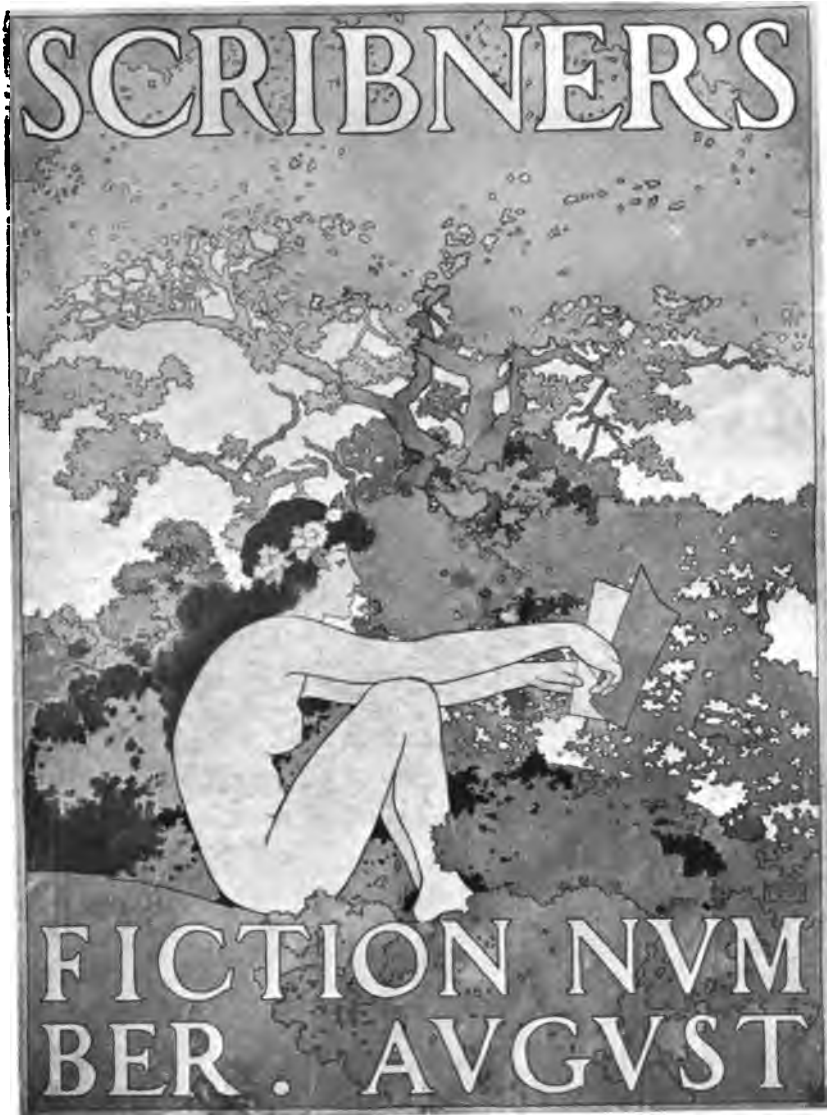
*Courtesy of and copyrighted by
The Century Company*

CENTURY MAGAZINE POSTER

August, 1897

MAXFIELD PARRISH

147



*Courtesy of
Scribner's Magazine*

SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE POSTER

August, 1897

MAXFIELD PARRISH

149



*Courtesy of and
Copyrighted by
General Electric Company*

EDISON MAZDA
MAXFIELD PARRISH (1920)
151

—there it is." There is nothing apologetic about this style, and for its purpose of advertising, it succeeds at sight. The consummately clever motor-car advertisement for the "*Pierce-Arrow*," and the clean-cut sketches of thoroughly eligible young men, have been refreshing notes of real brilliancy in the general run of mediocre posters in America.

In the "*Ivory*" poster—one of J. C. Leyendecker's first important designs, the clever work, though with a little less surety, which characterizes the present work of both the brothers, is evident. And his happy seizure of the coincidence of the bath-robe and the position of the letter "O" in the main word has made a saint of an every-day mortal, and cemented his entire composition together in a subtle way productive of suggestions larger than his actual material in hand. It is quaint and original where it might have been commonplace and stupid. And might one not read in the saint-and-soap combination that "Cleanliness is next to Godliness?"

In passing, one is inclined to take exception to the comments of a contemporary critic, who remarks, with regard to J. C. Leyendecker's "collar and cuff" advertisements (in the Third Annual Poster Show of 1910), that those groups showing a party of strikingly *au fait* people at the Horse Show, and the three golfers on a porch, playing with a collie, overshoot the mark with regard to strict adherence to the collars and cuffs under consideration. One would submit that while the actual subjects in view in the advertisement are excellent in themselves, they can hardly be conceded to constitute alone an entirely adequate raiment even for golf or the Horse Show, and that a none-too-broad artistic license might well allow Mr. Leyendecker not only to suggest the essentials of dress as well as the accessories, but also to present a general setting of more or less exclusive refinement, implying as it does, the *entrée* of the advertised product in our "best society."



*Courtesy of and
Copyrighted by
The Century Company*

CENTURY MAGAZINE POSTER
August, 1897
First Prize, Century Poster Contest
J. C. LEYENDECKER

153



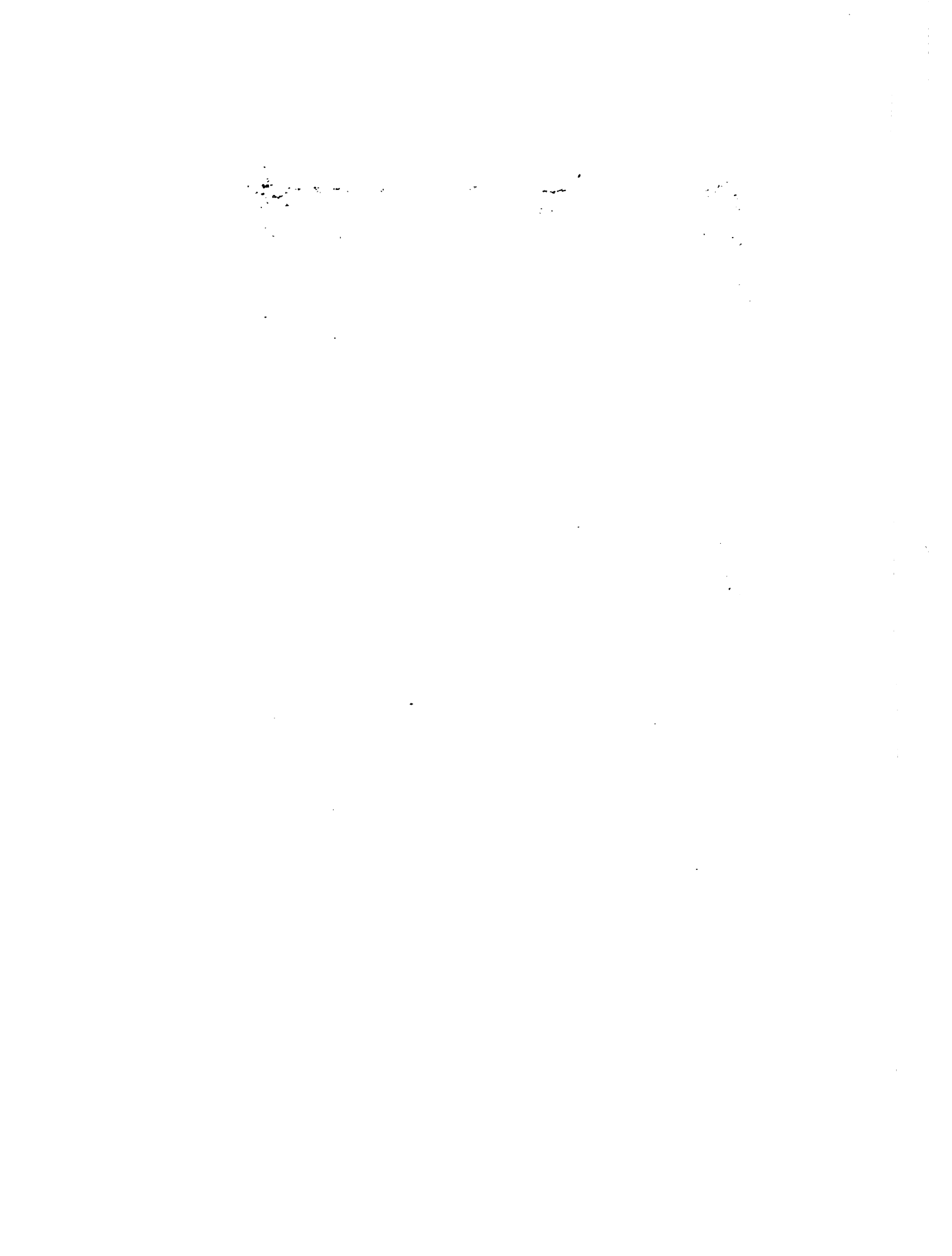
*Courtesy of and copyrighted by
The Procter-Gamble Company*

IVORY SOAP
J. C. LEYENDECKER (1900)

155



THE PIERCE ARROW
J. C. LEYENDECKER (1909)





*Courtesy of and
Copyrighted by
Interwoven Stocking Company*

INTERWOVEN SOCKS
J. C. LEYENDECKER (1920)
159



*Courtesy of and
Copyrighted by
Liggett and Meyers Tobacco Co.*

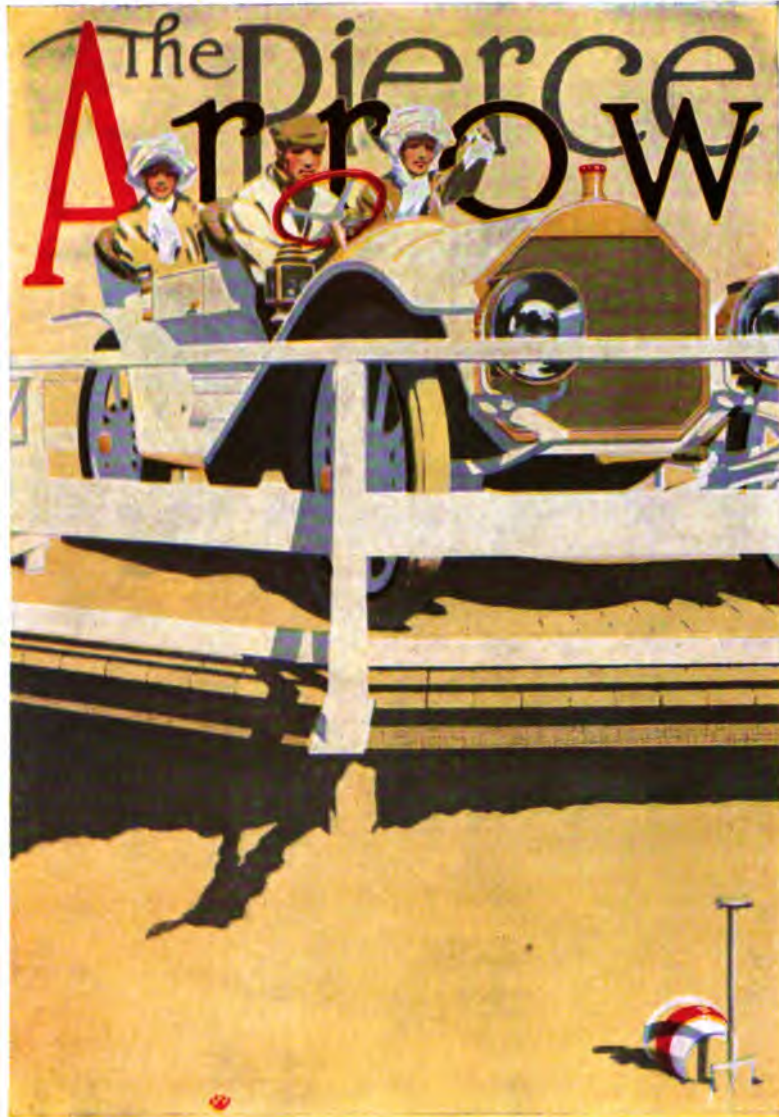
IT'S A CHESTERFIELD
J. C. LEYENDECKER (1920)
161

Mr. Penfield we know, and consequently appreciate, and in another chapter his work is more carefully considered. It is only in contrast to some present-day posters that I speak of his early technique as consisting of broad color-contrasts in perfectly flat masses, with delineation by means of strong black outlines. His present work, indeed, has grown widely different from his work at the time of the "*Poster Calendar*" and the old "*Harper's*" posters, and the development requires a study more detailed than the present chapter would allow.

Most noticeably at variance with this type of poster is that as designed by R. J. Wildhack, who works almost without a single line, entirely in contrasting masses, cleverly juxtaposed to produce strong effects. Nor is his range elaborate or in any way obscure—indeed its keynote is absolute simplicity, wherein lies its strength. The poster illustrated in the first chapter is pre-eminently excellent in every way, and fulfills every elusive tenet of poster design to the last degree.

Mr. Wildhack understands the principle and most important points involved in the design of a successful poster. He eliminates detail, but suggests its existence. He keeps his action at the front of the stage, and grandly ignores backgrounds. He shuns masses of small letters, and keeps his main legend clearly in mind, dashing it in with bold and graceful proportions, not only keeping it in scale with his composition, but usually incorporating it, as well. His "*September Scribner's*," in the first chapter, as well as nearly all his other work, carries also that psychological sense-impression which raises it above the danger of being merely *clever*—and makes it *clever poster work*.

In the "*Pierce-Arrow*" he presents a dazzling array of strong sunlight-and-shadow values, no less striking than in the "*September Scribner's*" poster, and the details of the motor car are masterfully suggested rather than in any sense delineated. One must know that the railed board-



THE PIERCE ARROW
ROBERT J. WILDHACK (1910)
163

walk where the car is stopping is at a beach, so he has introduced a toy pail and shovel in the foreground—a naïve group which presents in itself an uncommonly pretty play of bold shadow-work. And it were hard to find on an American poster a bit of lettering at once so simple, so intricate, so legible, and so much a part of the composition, both in scale and design as this bold legend whose place seems to defy actual location—being neither in the background nor in the foreground, nor yet, apparently, in any sense confused with the action of the middle distance.

As Mr. Wildhack himself says: "A poster can give no more than the 'spirit' or the 'atmosphere' of the subject . . ." And surely this theory on his part is belied by none of his posters, and is illustrated with particular force by his clever poster for a recent novel, "*The Circular Staircase*," which contains much besides its actual poster values.

In the collar poster—the equestrienne—George Brehm, of whose work it is typical, has presented an inelaborate idea in a clean, pleasant, straightforward way. Fortunate in his model and his subject, he has plainly made the best of both, with a happy result, at once simple and significant. It is essentially American, and equally essentially of the best that is American—and, characteristically, it speaks for itself.

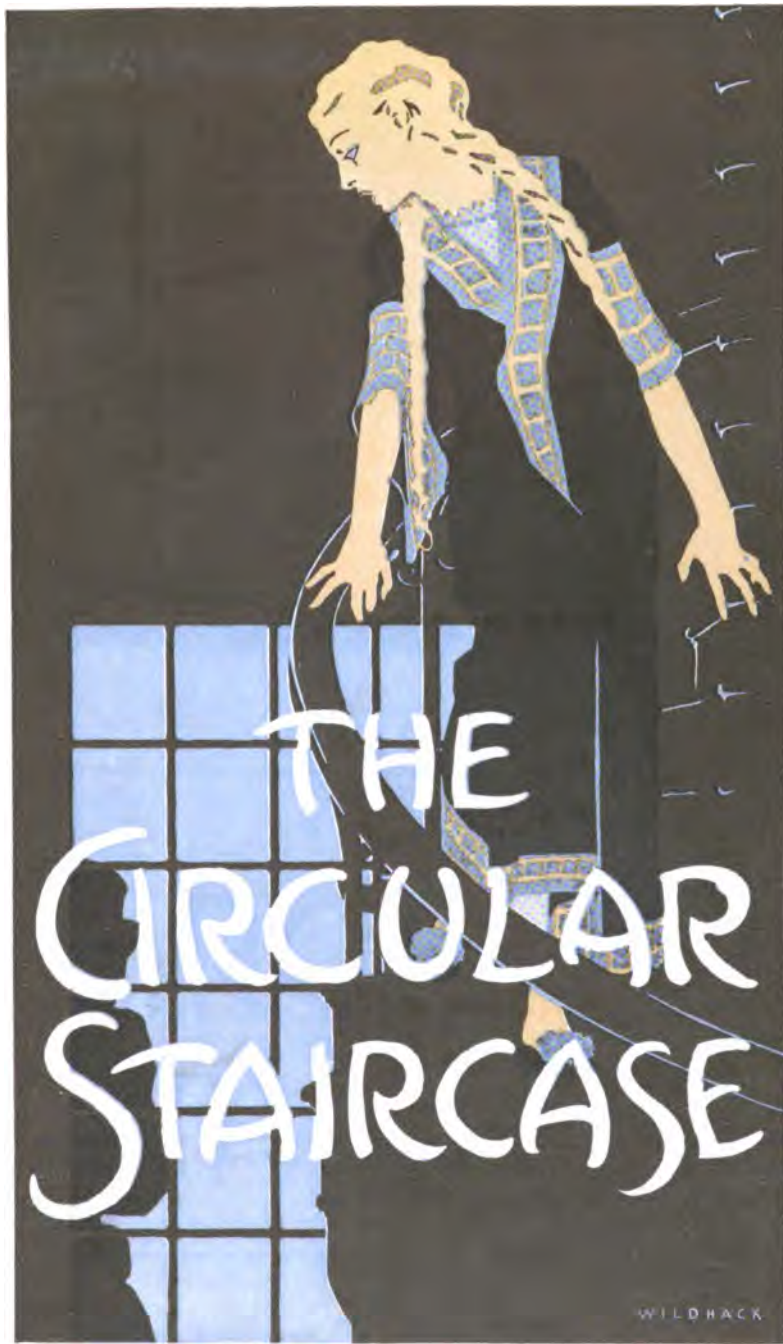
Louis Fancher has developed a technique suggesting, more than anything else, the work of certain European designers. He has, of late, strongly shown the influence of the great Ludwig Hohlwein, of Munich. There is a certain feeling in his work that makes definition very difficult, and withal there is a distinct and practical conception of the idea of a poster. All of which will be seen upon a study of his early "*Scribner's*" poster, in which the outline is not strong, nor is it weak—and the same may be said of the colors. The exact values are very elusive and hard to define, in much the same manner that a technical analysis of most Japanese work is totally baffling and equally unprofitable. And unconsciously or



*Courtesy of
Scribner's Magazine*

SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE POSTER
(March, 1906) ROBERT J. WILDHACK

165



*Courtesy of and copyrighted by
The Bobbs-Merrill Company*

THE CIRCULAR STAIRCASE
ROBERT J. WILDHACK (1908)

167





SKETCHES FOR POSTERS
AND MAGAZINE COVER
ROBERT J. WILDHACK

otherwise, Mr. Fancher made this poster with an Oriental subtlety entirely unlike any other work he has done. More characteristic of his work is the twenty-four-sheet poster for "*Sumurun*," one of the best things ever done in this country. In draughtsmanship, color and in the effective lighting (as though from foot-lights) it is a powerful piece of poster work, and quite eclipses its smaller companion poster, a two-sheet, in which the "beautiful slave girl," drawn identically as in the large poster, is seen in a cage, held up by the hunchback.

Adolph Treidler strikes a note still different, and distinctly interesting. He plays with light and shadow, with vigor and dexterity, depending for his effects upon strong illusions brought out simply by the skillful handling of broad masses of light and dark. His delineation by means of shadows shows how much may be accomplished by a kind of negative presentation of values.

Among those also whose work shows most interesting progress along the lines of good poster work, is M. C. Perley. For an informal example the sketch for a cigarette poster ("*Cigarettes Fanchez*") illustrates a phase of his style quite adequately.

F. G. Cooper has contributed consistently to the development of the poster in this country, and has always been conspicuous for excellent poster lettering, vigorous and legible. He is responsible for the present popularity of "lower case," or small Roman letters instead of capital letters, and after Penfield, was the first to point out the advantages of this kind of lettering on the score of better legibility. If, of necessity, the message to be lettered on a poster is lengthy, it will be found most difficult to read if rendered entirely in capital letters, as the eye is far more accustomed to reading the smaller letters. One of the most familiar of Mr. Cooper's advertising devices is the trade-mark of the New York Edison Company, the quaint little Colonial man with the electric lamp bulb, who



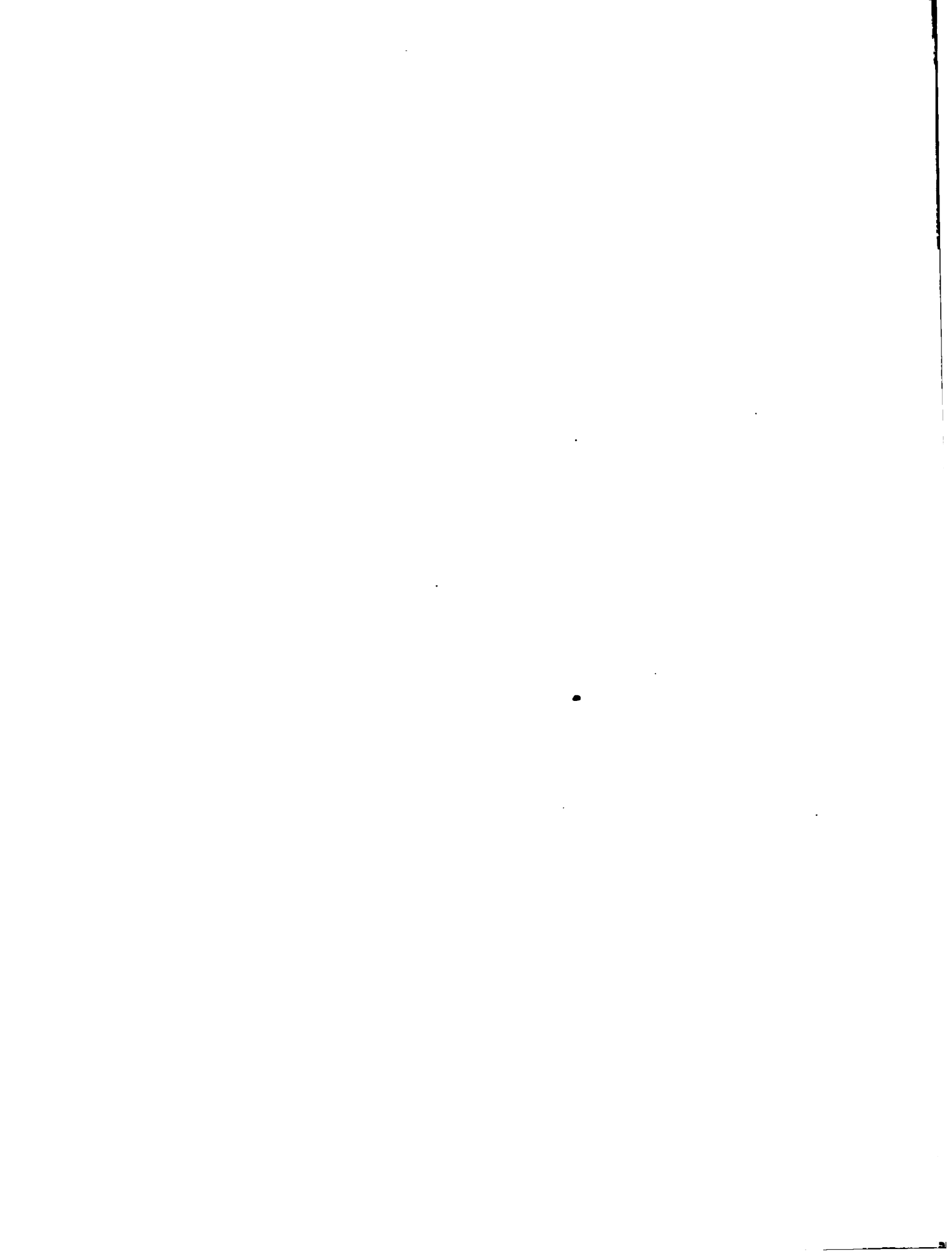
ARROW COLLAR
GEORGE BREHM (1910)



Courtesy of Scribner's Magazine

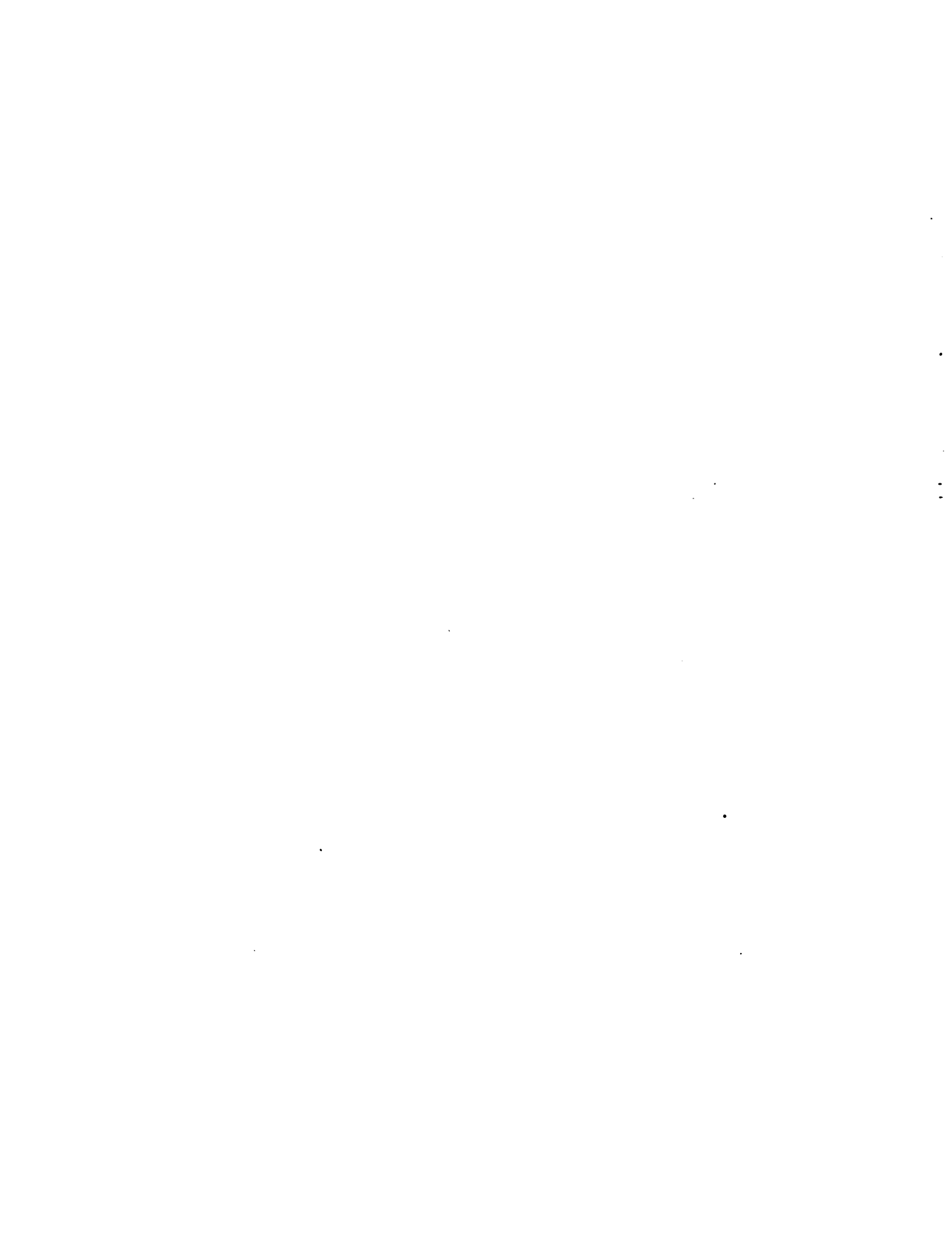
**SCRIBNER'S MAGAZINE POSTER
(September, 1907) LOUIS FANCHER**

173





SUMURUN
LOUIS FANCHER (1913)
175





Hitherto Unpublished

A CORNER OF THE STUDIO
ADOLPH TREIDLER (1911)

177



A L I C E

Hitherto Unpublished

ALICE
ADOLPH TREIDLER (1911)
179





Hitherto Unpublished

ALI EBN BECAR
ADOLPH TREIDLER (1909)
181



at the
5th
Ave.

**SPIRIT
LAND**

SPIRIT LAND
F. G. COOPER
183



AMERICA'S TRIBUTE TO BRITAIN

F. G. COOPER (1921)

185

Cigarette
FANCHEZ



CIGARETTE FANCHEZ
M. C. PERLEY (1911)

187

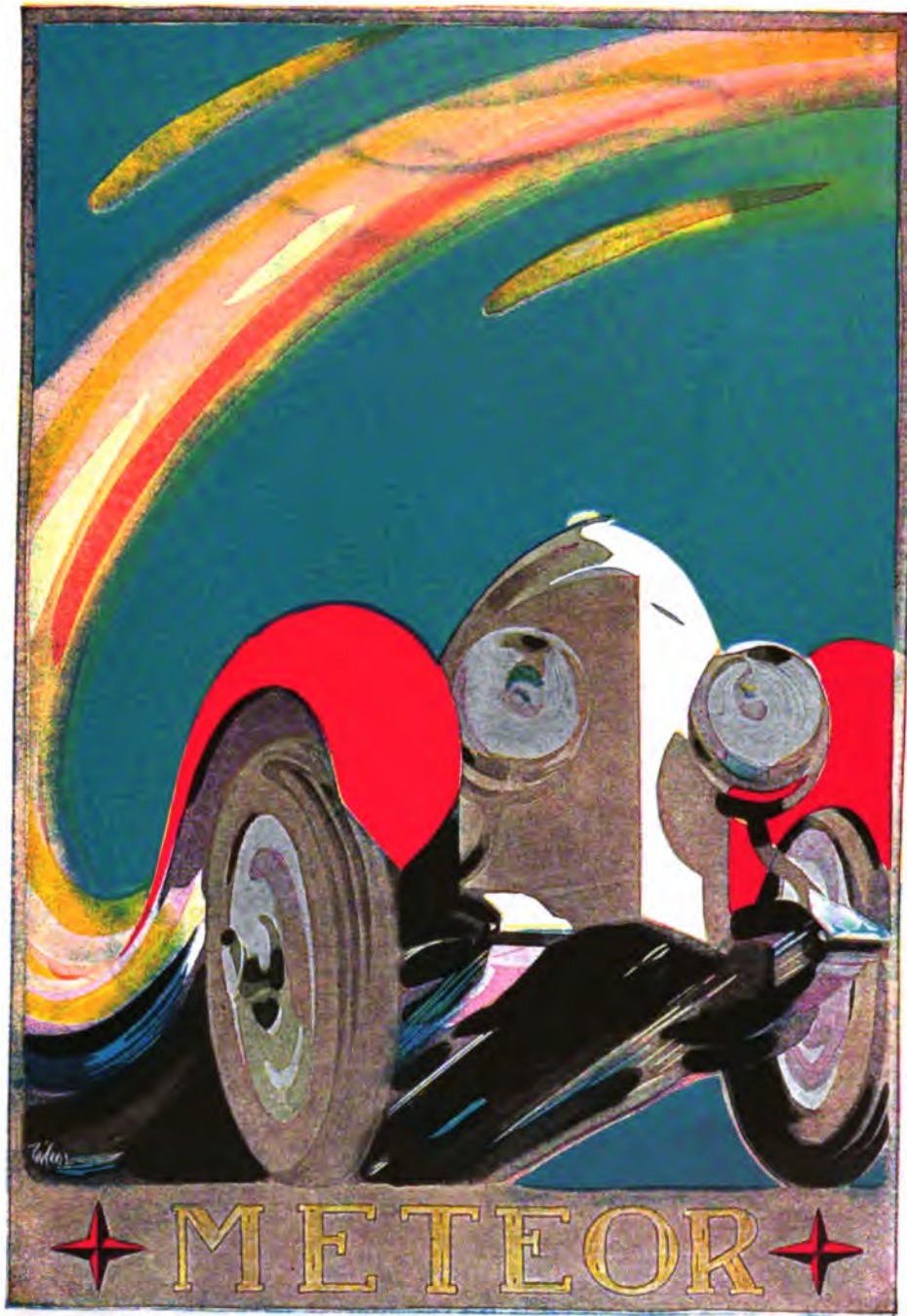
developed into an entire series of advertising drawings. Mr. Cooper has also made posters every year for the Electrical Show, and his work has more than fulfilled the promise of the early wood-block "one-sheets" which he made for Keith's Fifth Avenue Theatre. Of these, "*Spirit Land*" shows the excellent, simple, broad style which exemplifies the essence of the poster.

Another artist whose work is somewhat in the same vein as F. G. Cooper is C. B. Falls, who is one of the best poster men in this country. Falls succeeds in getting the effect of interesting texture in much of his work, and his color is always rich and unusual. Like Cooper, he is an exceptionally fine letterer and a good draughtsman, and the work of both men impels the critic to wonder at the ineptness of the frequently heard statement that America possesses no real poster artists. There are many, of remarkable ability, brilliance and resourcefulness. The reason they are less known, and are given such rare opportunities to show their powers is to be found in the lack of discernment among most buyers of advertising art when confronted with the problem of the poster.

Recent years have not only seen the production of much fine poster work in this country by men who had attained distinction before 1910, but have also seen the "arrival" of many new men, whose work gives promise of even better posters during the next ten years.

Paragraphic commentary on the remaining illustrations in this chapter will add many names to the roll of American poster designers, and it is the writer's only regret that more space is not available in this edition for both text and illustration covering more extensive selections of the newer work.

Roy Marvin Wilcox, from the evidence of his "*Meteor*" automobile poster, should be better known as a poster designer. This example certainly illustrates Hamilton King's dictum that a poster should be "a



*Courtesy of
Mr. H. R. Lounsberry, Jr.*

METEOR MOTORS
ROY MARVIN WILCOX (1920)
189



*Courtesy of
Charles Frohman, Esq.*

MAUDE ADAMS
BLENDON CAMPBELL
191

flash of color." There is speed in this poster, as the car seems to swoop downward and then up towards you in a breathless dip, and the fantastic swirl of color is a bold picturization of the name. An expert in the delineation of the motor car, Mr. Wilcox has also made some splendid paintings of the Rolls-Royce, Cunningham and du Pont cars.

Through the attainment of a remarkable mastery of pastel, Miss Neysa McMein has made a unique position for herself in the field of magazine covers and posters. Best known in the former work, she has high possibilities in the latter, where her able draughtsmanship gains the requisite poster strength in large size reproduction. She has done posters for the Girl Scouts of America and for The Young Women's Christian Association, and the illustration shows a window-card for "*Wallace Silver*," charming in execution, and cleverly composed so that the exquisite grace of the figure makes an effective contrast with the massive solidity of the chest of silverware. The type of the young bride is characteristic of Miss McMein's work, for she is very discriminating in her choice of models.

For some time confined to magazine covers, the work of C. Coles Phillips gradually attained poster value, and appeared in twenty-four-sheet form for the Overland Motor Car. Better known, however, are his "*Luxite Hosiery*" and "*Holeproof*" advertisements, which appeared in full color as magazine pages and also as one-sheet posters. Whatever Mr. Phillips' technique may lack in the breadth which makes for poster value, it compensates in qualities of *chic* and finish which give it a high advertising value, and accord it a strong demand in the advertising world.

John E. Sheridan, after years of experience in making group drawings for young men's clothes, has developed a free, spontaneous quality which possesses high advertising value and excellent poster strength. The illustration shows a typical example, chosen as being thoroughly characteristic of his work, and also because of the inclusion in the design of C. B.



*Courtesy of and
Copyrighted by
R. Wallace & Sons Manufacturing Co.*

**A TREASURE CHEST OF
WALLACE SILVER
NEYSA McMEIN (1920)**
193

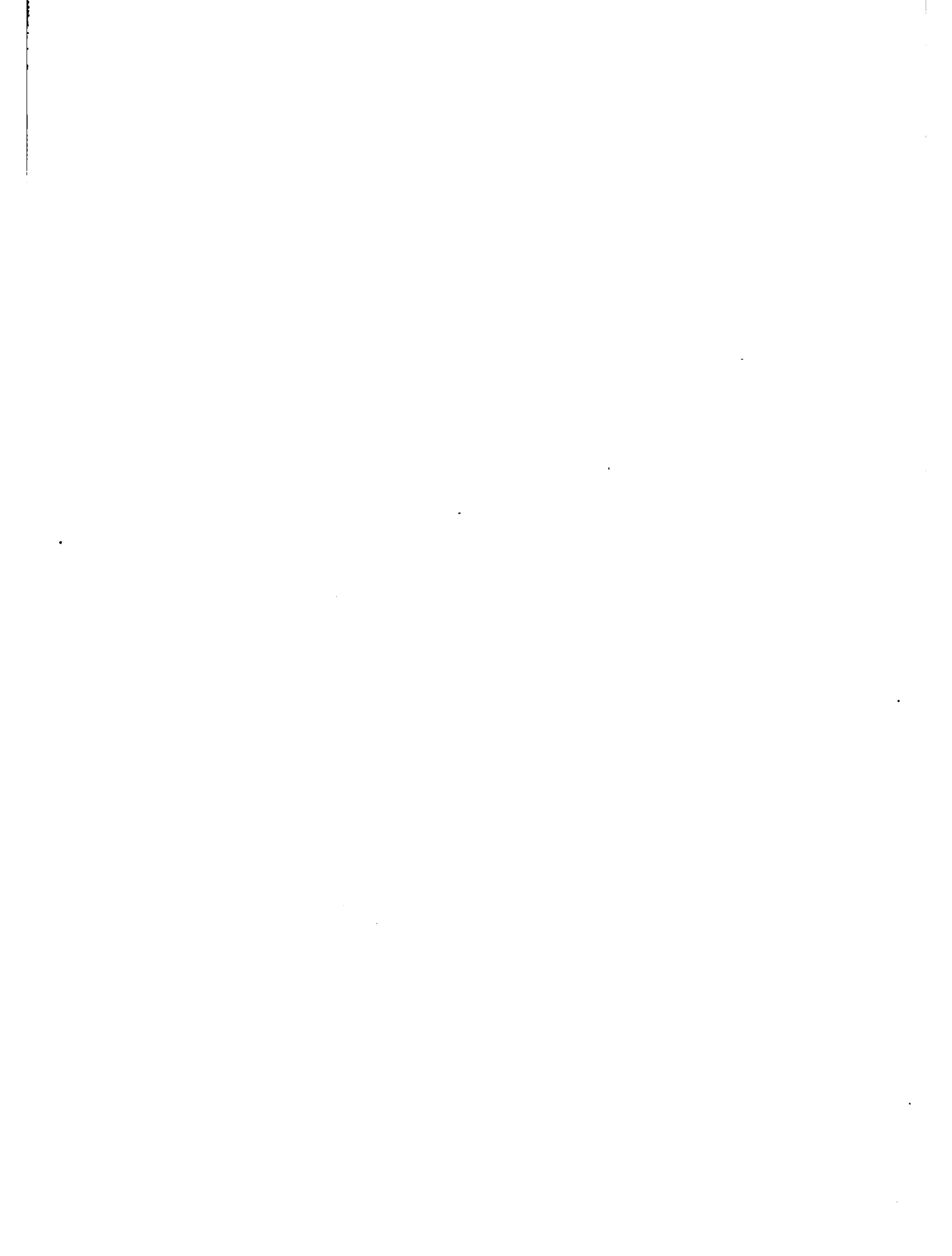




*Courtesy of and
Copyrighted by
Holeproof Hosiery Company*

**HOLEPROOF HOSIERY
C. COLES PHILLIPS (1921)**

195





This country can't afford waste in food or clothes—neither can you. Our clothes wear long and save

*Courtesy of and
Copyrighted by
Hart, Schaffner & Marx*

HART, SCHAFFNER & MARX POSTER
JOHN E. SHERIDAN (1919)

197

Fall's book poster (see page 283) made during the war to solicit donations of books for men in the service. *Hart, Schaffner & Marx* have for some years used enlarged Caslon type in place of hand lettering, even in their larger posters, an interesting device, and one which has proved very successful.

For some years the group of men who made the posters for this firm consisted of Edward Penfield, John E. Sheridan, Leon Gordon and F. Nelson Abbott. Abbott's earlier work was always interesting, but peculiarly meticulous in detail—a style from which he has found a brilliant escape in his more recent work, such as the painting of the sailor, dreaming over a sweetheart's face in a locket. Here is color, breadth and a free, spontaneous manner of delineation splendidly suited to poster work.

One of the newer men, a colorist and a technician, is C. C. Beale, who made a very interesting series of paintings for "*Chickering Pianos*." His style has the distinct charm of the unusual, and is essentially artistic, in both line and color, suggesting, as it does, that he is a thorough admirer of Japanese prints.

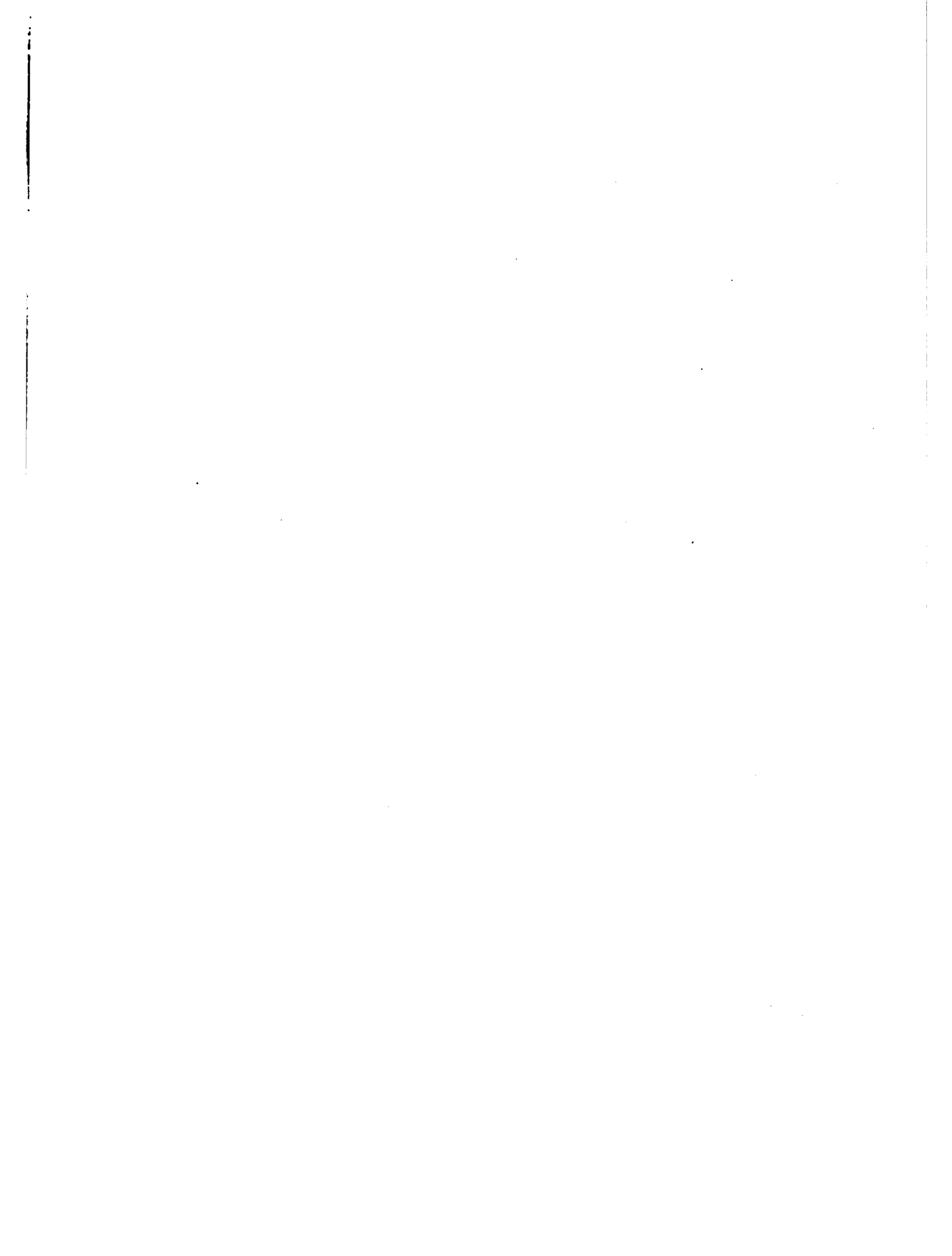
"Poster quality" is a strange thing, in that it often makes a poster good in spite of detrimental factors. The high order of "poster quality" in W. E. Heitland's "*Columbia Graphophone*" poster, of the Spanish dancer in red makes it one of the best posters of the year. It is tremendously effective, very decorative and gorgeously oblivious of the figure drawing which may or may not exist between the waist line and the feet. Zuloaga's shawl aids the decorative effect. With a splendid opportunity Mr. Heitland achieved a poster (illustrated here without its lettering) by all means one of the most important of the year.

The poster critic has for some years observed with increasing interest the technique of Leon Gordon, who has done some of the most important recent poster work in America. It has constantly improved toward a



*Courtesy of and
Copyrighted by
Chickering Pianos*

CHICKERING PIANOS
C. C. BEALE (1920)
201





*Courtesy of and
Copyrighted by
Columbia Graphophone Company*

**COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE
WILMOT HEITLAND (1920)**

203

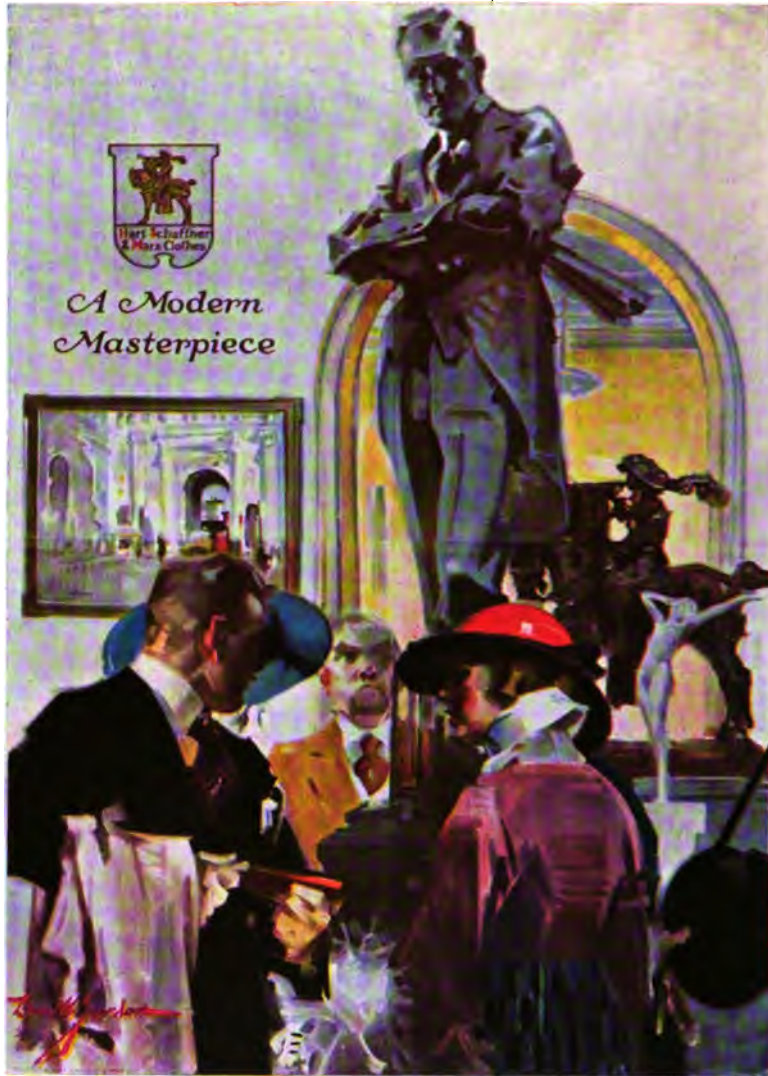


greater sincerity, and certain charges of superficiality which have been brought against it are readily dismissed when it is made known that Mr. Gordon developed impressionistic qualities as an earnest protest against the too-literal and "photographic" presentation of advertised products. It is his belief that the *impression* is more important than actual representation, and in thus carrying the creed of the impressionists into the field of advertising art, he has made a distinctly worthwhile contribution. He believes, too, in vivid and vivacious color, and in the "*Modern Masterpiece*" clothing poster he shows, as well, a keen sense for clever, striking and original advertising ideas. This is a poster which, in both idea and execution stands high among American posters.

Another artist who produces poster work in somewhat the vein of C. C. Beale is Edmund Davenport, who works with a no less decorative and interesting "sketchiness," but with a somewhat heavier line. His color, too, is a little more vigorous, and his work on a striking set of window cards in full color, for "*Sweet-Orr*" Overalls prompts the hope that his hand will be seen in some large and important poster assignment. This set of window cards interestingly portrays the world-wide distribution of the advertised product, by means of different strange beasts of burden transporting it across the distant countries of the earth.

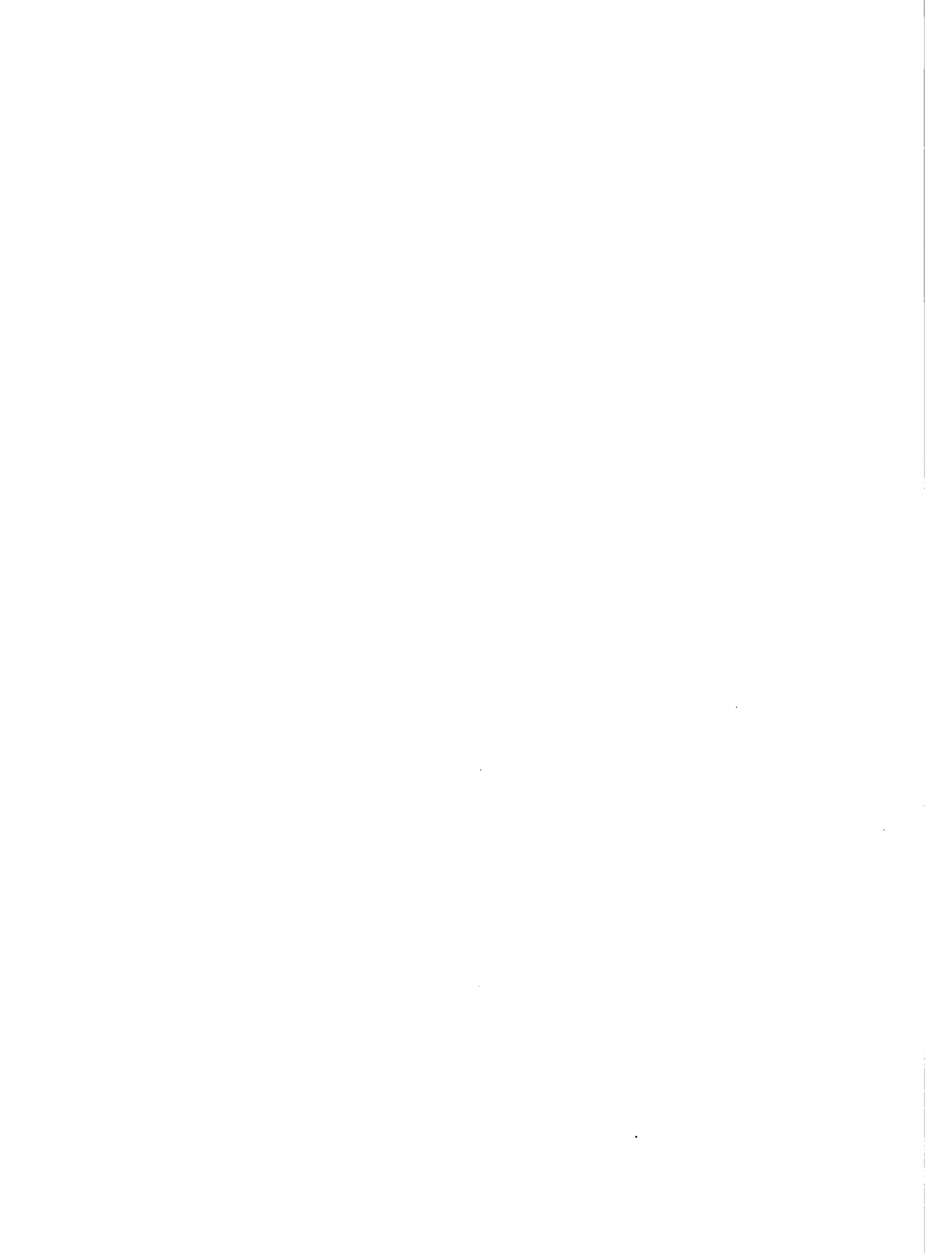
A recent (1920-21) development of poster advertising is seen in the use of large heads, especially for cigarettes and tobacco. Notable in this class of posters is the great J. C. Leyendecker series for "*Chesterfield*" cigarettes, and the heads done by William Oberhardt for "*Fatima*" cigarettes. Merit in these series of posters, as well as the posters for "*Piedmont Cigarettes*" and "*Velvet Pipe Tobacco*," is due to the discrimination of Mr. F. A. Wilson, art director for the manufacturers—as in the case of Mr. Pick and the London Underground Railways Company. The advertising value of the "large head" type of poster lies not only in the





*Courtesy of and
Copyrighted by
Hart, Schaffner & Marx*

**A MODERN MASTERPIECE
LEON GORDON (1917)
205**





*Courtesy of and
Copyrighted by
Sweet, Orr & Company*

SWEET, ORR OVERALLS
EDMUND DAVENPORT (1920)
207

"large effect" in general, and in the gigantic scale achieved in the twenty-four-sheet sizes, but in the opportunity to delineate the *character* in the face of the user of the product. This character delineation, if successfully done, accomplishes a large part of the advertising message, and in this type of work Mr. Oberhardt has attained first-rank distinction.

One of the best twenty-four-sheet posters ever produced in this country was painted by Harry Morse Meyers, whose work possesses certain marked characteristics of distinct poster value. The first of these, *composition* is admirably illustrated in the "*Chalmers*" twenty-four-sheet. The low viewpoint adds to the scale and impressiveness of the motor car, and the grouping of the figures is excellently thought out. Good drawing, and a liking for vigorous color both add to the value of Mr. Meyer's work, and above all it is characterized by the spirit of realism, of real people doing real and likely things. And he owns a happy knack of getting a great deal of *outdoors* into his paintings—to such an extent, indeed, that an instinctive feeling of actually *being* outdoors is experienced as a first reaction. (The lettering illustrated is roughly sketched in.)

In connection with two twenty-four-sheet posters made for "*Piedmont*" cigarettes by Walter Whitehead, a brief commentary on the problem of this type of poster should be made. And the same problem is involved in the car-card, which is of only slightly different proportion. The long horizontal is an extremely difficult shape in which to secure a "large effect"—a circumstance which has added to the popularity of the "large head" for twenty-four-sheets—utilized notably by several popular brands of cigarettes, and in a fine series (1921) by Clarence Underwood for "*Palmolive Soap*." The ingenious device in the two "*Piedmont*" posters is found in the illusion of large scale in the figures produced by the low horizon line, and the distant miniature landscapes. I have never seen full-length figures more cleverly managed in the design of twenty-four-sheet

FATIMA

a sensible cigarette

20 for 25¢ *"just enough Turkish"*
-that's why



*Courtesy of and
Copyrighted by
Liggett & Meyers Tobacco Co.*

FATIMA
WILLIAM OBERHARDT (1920)



*Courtesy of and
Copyrighted by
Chalmers Motor Car Co.*

CHALMERS
HARRY MORSE MEYERS (1920)
209


posters, and these were equally effective as car-cards. The coloring is excellent, the technique broad and vigorous and the lettering straightforward and honest in design, excellently conforming to the Colonial spirit intended in the whole concept.

The designer of the twenty-four-sheet or the car-card cannot study his space too carefully, or afford to under-rate the design problem involved. The recent distinct improvement in this type is obviously of great significance in the development of American posters.

Summarizing this chapter, one point aside from the many of color, composition, technique and lettering should stand out. The poster in America has developed tremendously, and partly as a cause and partly as a result, poster artists have developed in this country. Let us recognize their ability and encourage it, and cease the old habit of looking constantly over our shoulders at the work of European poster artists. We can learn much from them, but let us cease the student weakness of copying them. Let us feel that we are making and will make posters here, the work of American artists, that will be sought and copied by European art students. Certainly, in poster design, if we do not stop following, it will be many years before we can hope to lead.

On the whole, we are making better posters to-day than ever before—posters which have none of the amateur appearance of much earlier work, and posters which more effectively convey specific advertising messages.

why
argue



for cigarettes Virginia
tobacco is best

Piedmont

The Virginia Cigarette
10 for 9¢
20 for 18¢

Sunny Virginia's Gift to Smokers



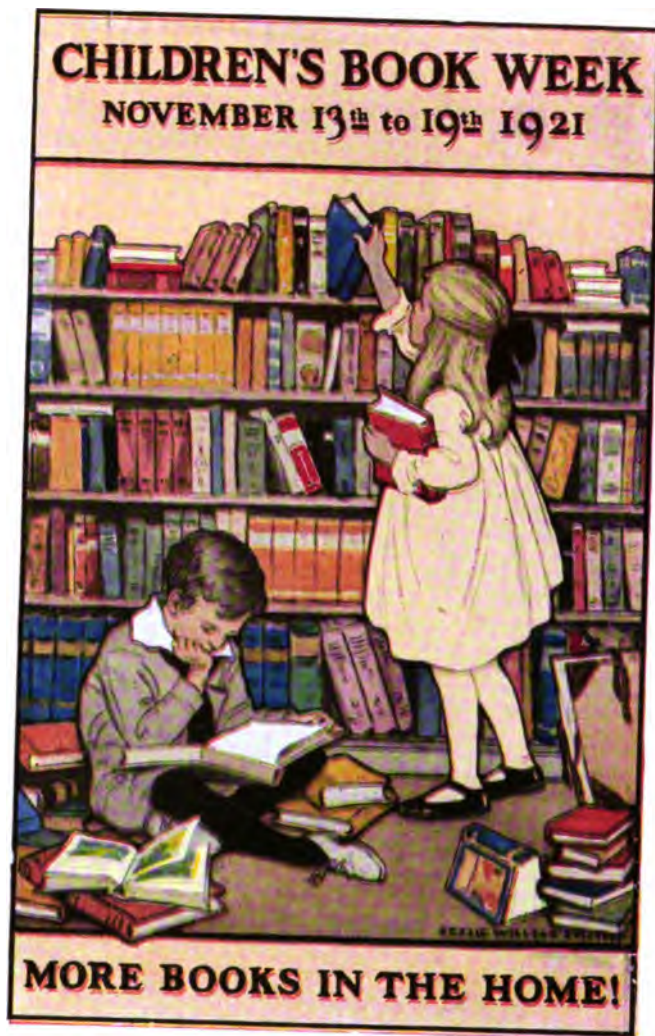
Piedmont

The Virginia Cigarette
10 for 9¢
20 for 18¢

Courtesy of ana
Copyrighted by
Liggett & Meyers Tobacco Co.

PIEDMONT CIGARETTES
WALTER WHITEHEAD (1921)
211





*Courtesy of National
Association of Book Publishers*

CHILDREN'S BOOK WEEK POSTER
JESSIE WILCOX SMITH (1921)

213

**EDWARD
PENFIELD**



**HIS
BOOK**

CHAPTER V.

The Work of Edward Penfield.

It must be kept in mind that the work of Mr. Penfield presents a distinct and very pronounced development, of which, however, the extraordinary range is more in the matter of technique than of feeling. These periods, roughly speaking, comprise his early work, his first change of style, his work in Holland, and lastly his present work, as represented particularly by his drawings in Spain, and generally by a kind of selective composite of everything that is best in all his previous work.

His early period, represented by the old posters for Harper's Magazine beginning in 1892—the first real posters to appear in America—were not influenced by French masters to any degree whatever, in spite of a visit to Paris about this time. For all of Mr. Penfield's training was in the Art Students' League in New York, and the only element of outside inspiration of any kind entering into these first posters came from a source at once unexpected and bizarre—from a precedent of precedents, though by no means a source which the keenest analysis of his work could discover. And this source was nothing less than the treatment of groups of figures on the Egyptian sarcophagi in the Metropolitan Museum, a treatment bold and flat of mass, with cleverly contrasted colors and heavy black outlines—the first posters in all the world. So with this inspiration in the point merely of actual color and technique, it is to be concluded at once that the *composition* of Mr. Penfield's posters was utterly and entirely original—that his startling unbalanced compositions, his infallible sense of suggesting a large idea on a small sheet of paper, and his massive, cleanly drawn

letters—were his own. There were many imitators—after the first few of the “Penfield Posters” appeared, but the public adhered to the original, and the demand for these quaint and absolutely *new* drawings became more and more frantic, until it seems that the editions of the posters exceeded in number and demand the editions of the magazine itself. This was at the height of the “fad,” when, as outlined in the preceding chapter, America was in the throes of a wide-spread convulsion in matters of art in general. It is not of this phase of the question that one proposes to deal—not with the tremendous popularity of the moment, but rather with the lasting excellence of these early posters by Mr. Penfield, the excellence which makes them just as intrinsically good now as they were then, and which has defied the years that have elapsed since their production to fade their charm in any way.

Technically, all of these first posters were similar—in point of the unique properties of each one in other respects, they demand the most individual attention.

Under the first head they will be found to present all of the essential poster-values making for excellence, and to show this the more clearly by a sweeping and masterful elimination of all those stupid and ill-studied mistakes which blight so many examples of work by contemporary and subsequent designers.

The analysis of “*The Poster Calendar, 1897*” applies in every particular to all Mr. Penfield’s work of this period. Recapitulating these points, one finds strong composition, equally strong color, applied in great flat masses, bold delineation of outline, and lettering at once an integral part of the whole, and unquestionably adequate and co-important in mass and relative scale. There are no confusing elements of composition—no puzzling distances or distracting backgrounds. All the action is at the front of the stage, and any accessories that appear are so skillfully sub-



*Courtesy of
Harper's Magazine*

**HARPER'S MAGAZINE POSTER
EDWARD PENFIELD**

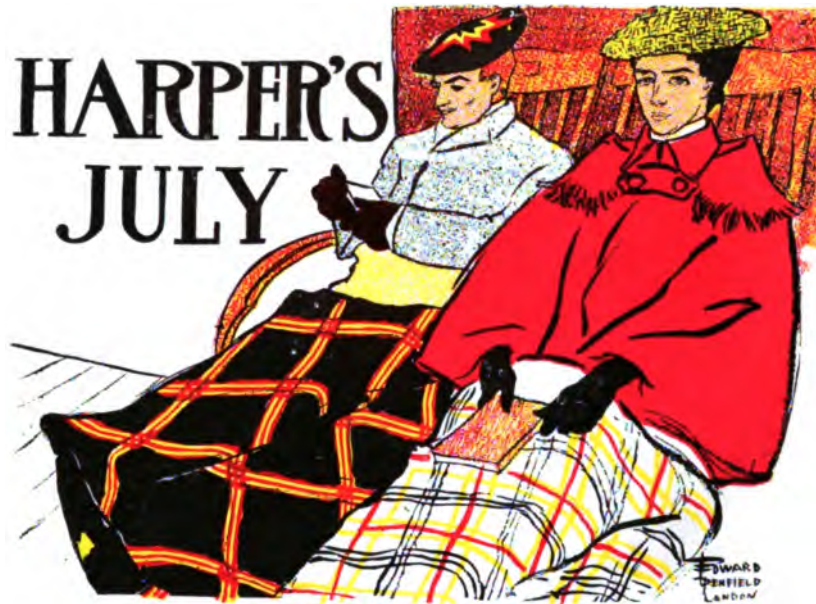
217

ordinated as to detract in no measure from the simplicity of motive and directness of story as expressed by the main figures. Masses of small letters have been sublimely ignored, and every one of these posters breathes of a largeness and freedom peculiarly adapting them for purposes of outdoor advertising. They are all so eminently self-sufficient—with a poise of their own and a gracious self-assurance like well-bred people, never obtrusive, but ever prepared to take their part in whatever surroundings their fortunes may place them. One has hung these posters in every kind of room and habitation—but they never seem out-of-place or tiresome. Some of them always carry a free breath of out-doors, while others as distinctly suggest different pleasant trains of thought. Surely, this is *personality*—these posters have actual *character*.

They speak for themselves, and show their almost unique value as posters by needing no elaborate interpretation. The hansom-cab is thrust into the foreground with masterfully clever audacity, and plainly suggests by its largeness of scale an idea larger than the confines of the sheet. It will be observed upon a study of the twelve posters of this series presented here, that in only one is the entire figure inside the edges of the sheet, and in only one is the lettering in any degree detached from the composition as a whole. They are all of strong and simple yet highly original coloring. The voyagers ensconced in steamer-chairs, the visitors at the Horse Show, the various care-free vacationists at the seashore—all tell their story and suggest as well the various pleasant pursuits of pleasant people.

The bizarre pose of the girl in the great rocking-chair is a wonderfully apt instance of the cleverest kind of informality in design, combined with strong value in suggested proportion. The coloring is as simple and apparently ingenuous as the drawing, and the whole as thoroughly inimitable as it is characteristic of Mr. Penfield.

Of this whole series, the "*May*" poster, of the girl with the two



*Courtesy of
Harper's Magazine*

**HARPER'S MAGAZINE POSTER
EDWARD PENFIELD**

219

Angora cats has, perhaps, the greatest and most lasting charm. Its quaint originality and again the absolute informality of its subject and the extraordinary simplicity of its treatment make it a poster that one remembers for years after it has been put away. It is plainly of the same order as the "*Poster Calendar*," and if it is not as strictly appropriate or specifically suggestive, its charm alone would carry it, with its strong poster values.

Not long after the cessation of this series came the first noticeable change in Mr. Penfield's technique. About 1899 or 1900 appeared drawings with the same feeling as the old "*Harper's*" work, but with finer outlines and more carefully studied delineation of face. Though later in date, the "*Metropolitan Magazine*" cover for July (in chapter VII) is a fair example of this. Much commercial work and many cover-designs for "*Collier's Weekly*" and "*The Saturday Evening Post*" appeared, with technique alternating sometimes toward the old work and sometimes toward the new.

This reversion to the characteristic old method of bold line and simple idea is typified by his own book-plate, done about 1902, which is as charming as anything from his brush and possibly of greater charm than some more pretentious works.

Besides the famous "*Poster Calendar*" of 1897, Mr. Penfield designed a "*Golf Calendar*" in 1899 (Reprinted in 1900 with a new cover-design), a very clever "*Stencil Calendar*" in 1904, and an "*Automobile Calendar*" in 1907. There was also the "*Country Carts*" series, in 1900—a portfolio of cleverly studied yet simply rendered drawings of various types of dog-cart and breaking-cart and the like.

The details of the construction of these, and of the essentials of the harness are manipulated with a skill characteristic of no one but Mr. Penfield, and this same *artistic accuracy* he later applied to the mechanism of automobiles. A machine so utterly modern as the automobile called for

HARPER'S



*Courtesy of
Harper's Magazine*

HARPER'S MAGAZINE POSTER
EDWARD PENFIELD

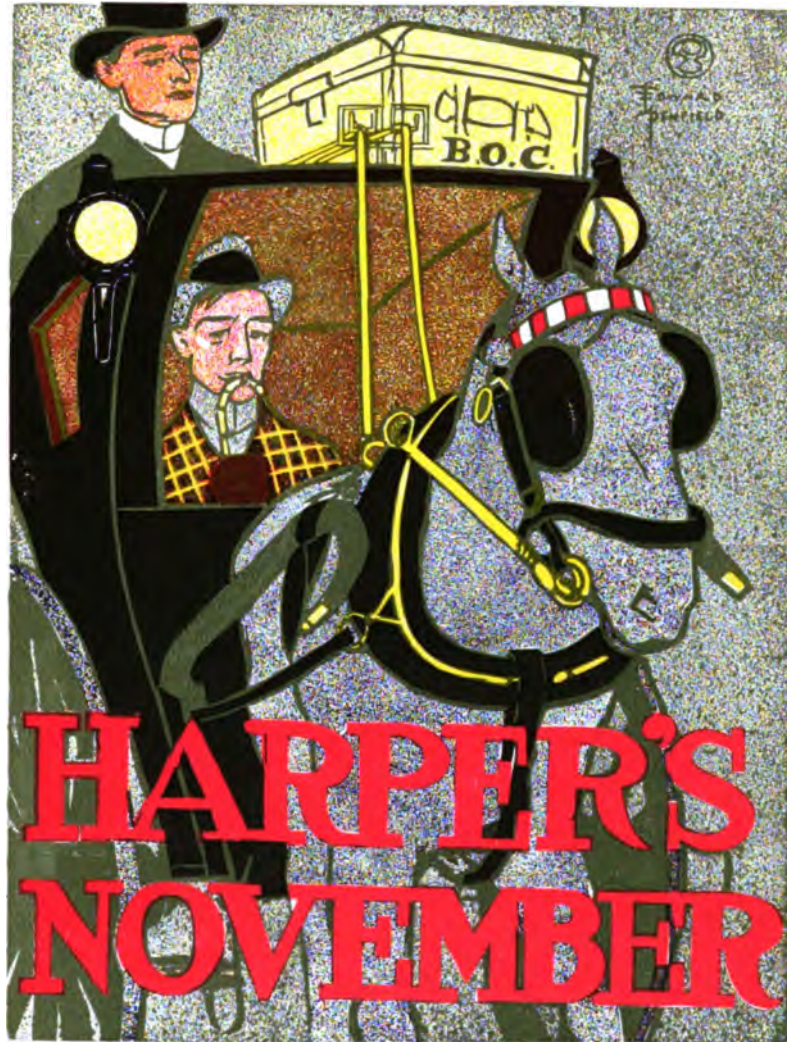
221

immediate ingenuity on the part of the designers in general to devise some means of portraying it in a manner at once convincing and artistic. There was no precedent in the matter, and many attempts were made, and are still being made, to present not only an automobile, but some specific make and at the same time not to let that presentation become in any way photographic.

Mr. Penfield stepped into the breach at once, and deftly delineated motor-cars in a sort of poster short-hand that was both adequate and pleasing, for his conscientious studies of harness and of carriage construction gave him a tremendous advantage over his contemporaries, and were directly applicable to the delineation of the motor-car.

An interesting estimate of Mr. Penfield's work, in a review written perhaps ten years ago, brings out rather clearly some significant points:

"Edward Penfield has a reputation, not confined to our own shores, as the creator of the American poster . . . Mr. Penfield is one of the few manipulators of brush and pen who have adapted themselves gracefully and on a high plane to the demand of modern art conditions in this country. One must argue from his work to the man a fine perception of the commercial purveyor's needs and his desire to please the multitude. Whether the purveyor has for sale an art tome or a laundry soap matters little with Mr. Penfield, so that he has a free hand when called upon to symbolize an object in the universal language of line and color. He has never been of the artistic cult which raises hands of horror at commercialism. It has always been so much the vogue among artists to decry anything that smacked of business or that was not wholly subtle, that the creations of Mr. Penfield's brusque artistry came upon these sensitive souls in the nature of a shock. And yet, mystery of mysteries, his work was confessedly interesting, his compositions 'bully,' and his color-schemes exquisite. The 'Penfield Poster' came into being with a kind of masterful complacency, and it



*Courtesy of
Harper's Magazine*

HARPER'S MAGAZINE POSTER
EDWARD PENFIELD

223

has outlived all its competitors. To-day it is accepted along with wireless telegraphy and motor trucks. Mr. Penfield has never quite abandoned his familiar poster-style; it is too much a part of him to be set aside whether he will or not. His work needs no signature to be recognized. He has grown more sound in his drawing of late; his hand is firmer and his ideas are more simple and far-reaching. But the agreeable flat tones, the big masses of light and shade, the general largeness of his work, are now, as they have always been, a delight to the eye."

Mr. Penfield made two very successful inroads upon the field of mural decorations some years ago—first in a group of collegians in the breakfast room of Randolph Hall in Cambridge, and again for the living-room in a country club at Rochester. These digressions from strictly "commercial art" were executed in such spirit as to render them thoroughly happy in their effects, and their success, indeed, would go far to prove an analogy stated by Mr. Wildhack between posters and mural decorations, for Mr. Wildhack holds the theory that audacity of conception, boldness and freedom of delineation, general simplicity of technique, and combined strength and refinement of color should be common to both.

Although Mr. Penfield visited Holland in 1899, it was not until his second visit, in 1902, that his delightful sketches of Dutch girls, windmills and canals, began to appear. The quaint simplicity of all things Dutch happens to be peculiarly adaptable to translation in poster style, and of this peculiarity Mr. Penfield took full advantage. Upon his visit to Spain five years later, however, the complexity of values in line and color and national atmosphere forced him into a style quite different from any work he had done before.

The "*Holland Sketches*," after appearing in magazine form, with charming text (characterized in a modest but very misleading manner by the artist-author as 'an excuse to publish the illustrations') were brought



*Courtesy of
Harper's Magazine*

**HARPER'S MAGAZINE POSTER
EDWARD PENFIELD**

225

out in a thoroughly delightful book.* It is fortunate that these sketches, unlike Mr. Penfield's more transient work, are thus permanently preserved.

The technique in these drawings will be observed to be very close in feeling to his much earlier work, though with greater finesse of line, assurance of delineation and simply expressed complexity of color.

In 1907 Mr. Penfield visited Spain, and his "Impressions"† as they subsequently appeared in "Scribner's Magazine"—text and sketches—added a new chapter to the development of his style, and created much interest among those who had studied it in past years.

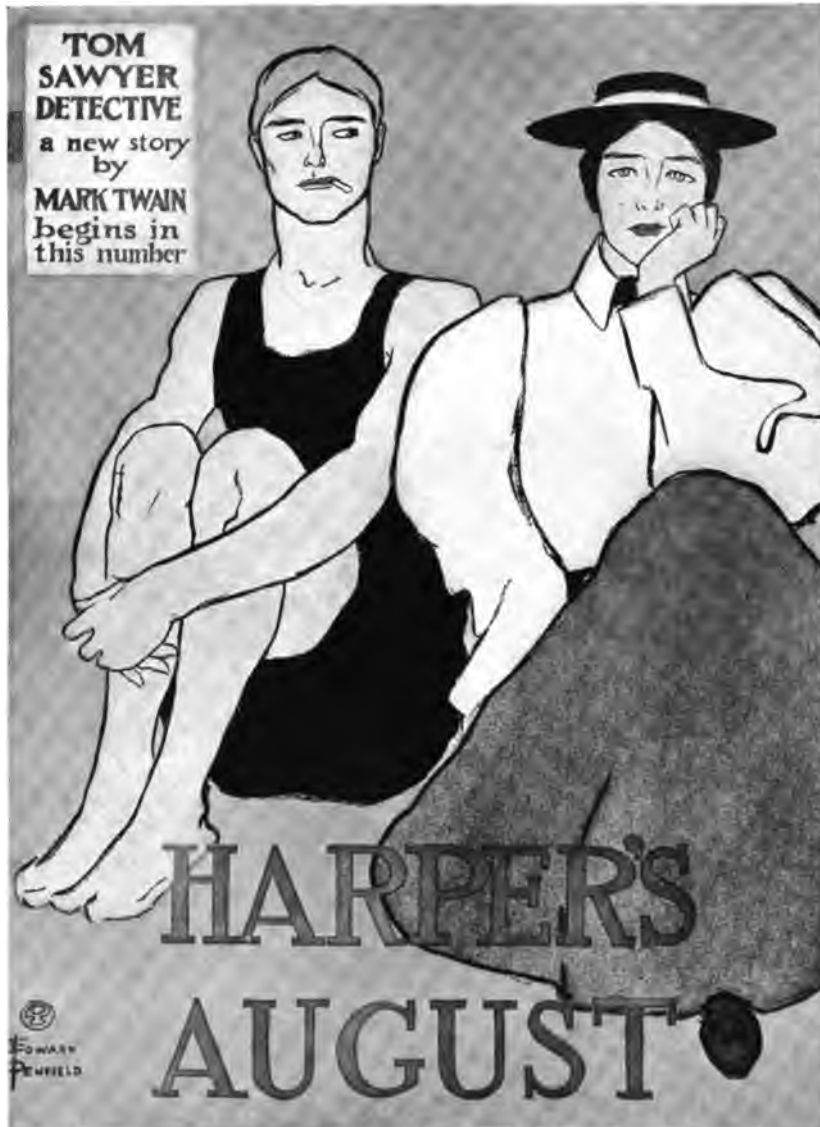
For in nearly all this work the characteristic black outline was abandoned, and the studies were of the value of very charming pictures rather than posters. The drawing was very assured, the colors of a soft blended quality, no longer in flat masses, and the whole feeling that of the artist rather than the designer.

From the standpoint of poster values, indeed the Spanish sketches possess not even such an intention on the part of their author, and the typical example presented here is simply by way of post-script and by virtue of the fact that the immediate consideration in this chapter is the illustration of the entire range of Mr. Penfield's versatility.

Retrospectively considered, it is not to be questioned but that Mr. Penfield's work in the poster field, from its earliest beginnings, has been of significance unequalled by that of any one other designer. There were never any retrograde periods or even intervals of inactivity in his constant and untiring presentation of drawing after drawing—each one of which had its effect in the gradual upward trend of commercial art in America—each one of which was a shot fired in a steadily winning battle.

* "Holland Sketches," Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1907.

† "Spanish Sketches," Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1911.



*Courtesy of
Harper's Magazine*

**HARPER'S MAGAZINE POSTER
EDWARD PENFIELD**

227



*Courtesy of
Harper's Magazine*

**HARPER'S MAGAZINE POSTER
EDWARD PENFIELD**

229



*Courtesy of
Harper's Magazine*

**HARPER'S MAGAZINE POSTER
EDWARD PENFIELD**

231



*Courtesy of
Harper's Magazine*

**HARPER'S MAGAZINE POSTER
(May, 1897) EDWARD PENFIELD**

233





*Courtesy of
Harper's Magazine*

**HARPER'S MAGAZINE POSTERS
EDWARD PENFIELD**

HOLLAND SKETCHES

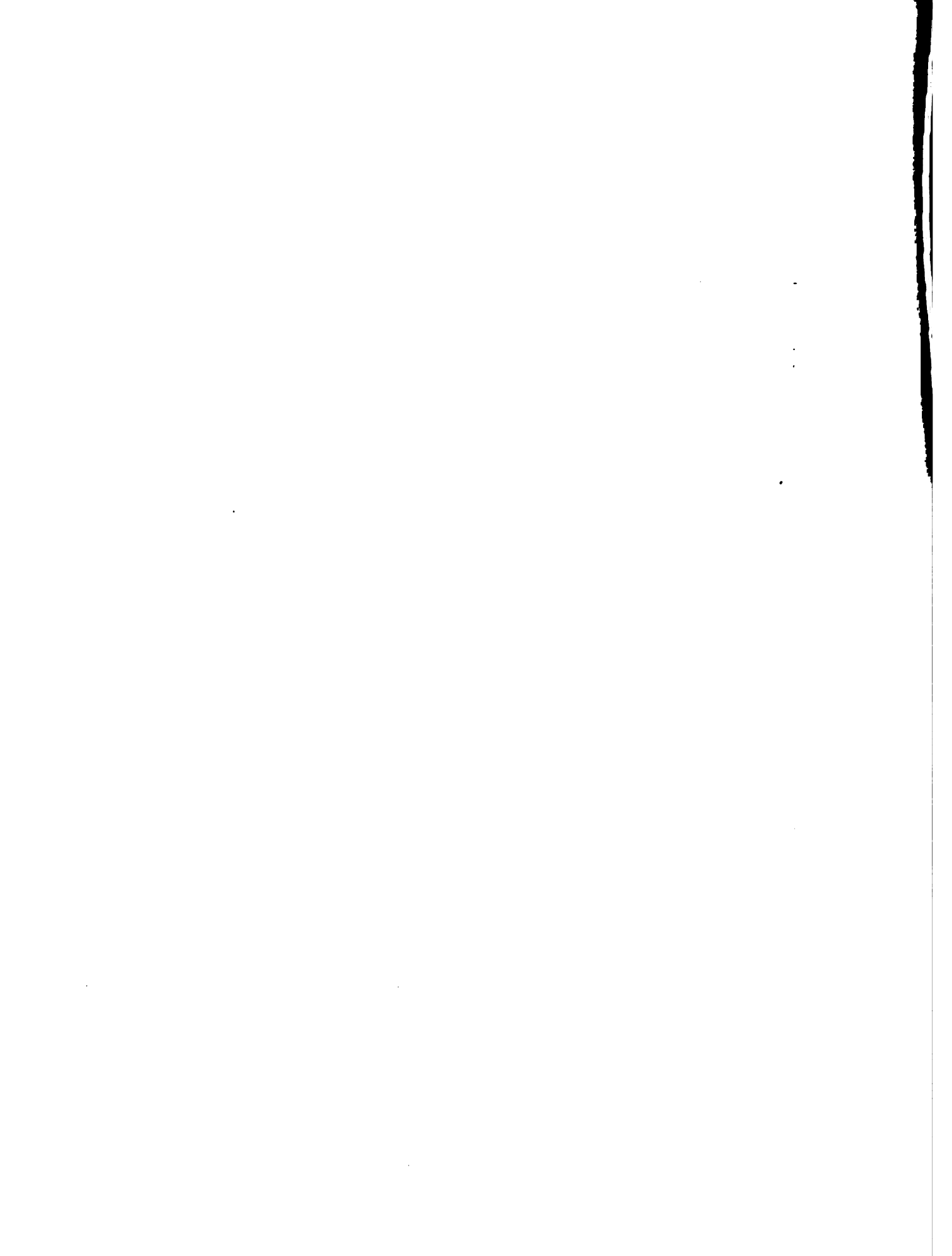
EDWARD PENFIELD



*Courtesy of and copyrighted by
Charles Scribner's Sons*

COVER DESIGN FOR
HOLLAND SKETCHES
EDWARD PENFIELD (1907)

237





*Courtesy of and copyrighted by
Charles Scribner's Sons*

**HOLLAND SKETCHES
EDWARD PENFIELD (1907)**



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Charles Scribner's Sons*

**A HOLLAND SKETCH
EDWARD PENFIELD (1907)**

241



Hitherto Unpublished

**SILHOUETTES
EDWARD PENFIELD**

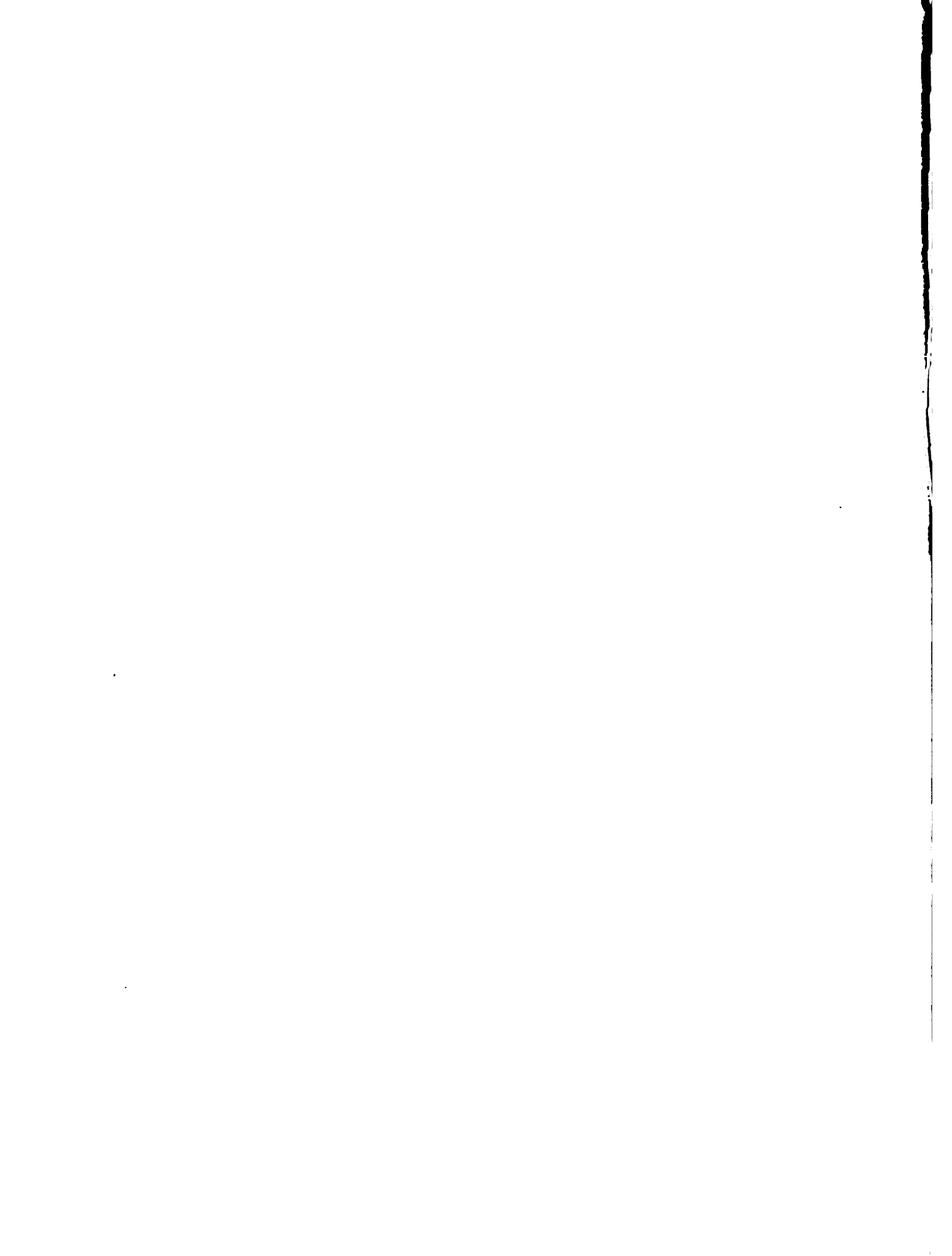
243



*Courtesy of and Copyrighted by
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**A SPANISH IMPRESSION
EDWARD PENFIELD (1909)**

245



A Stenciled Calendar for 1904



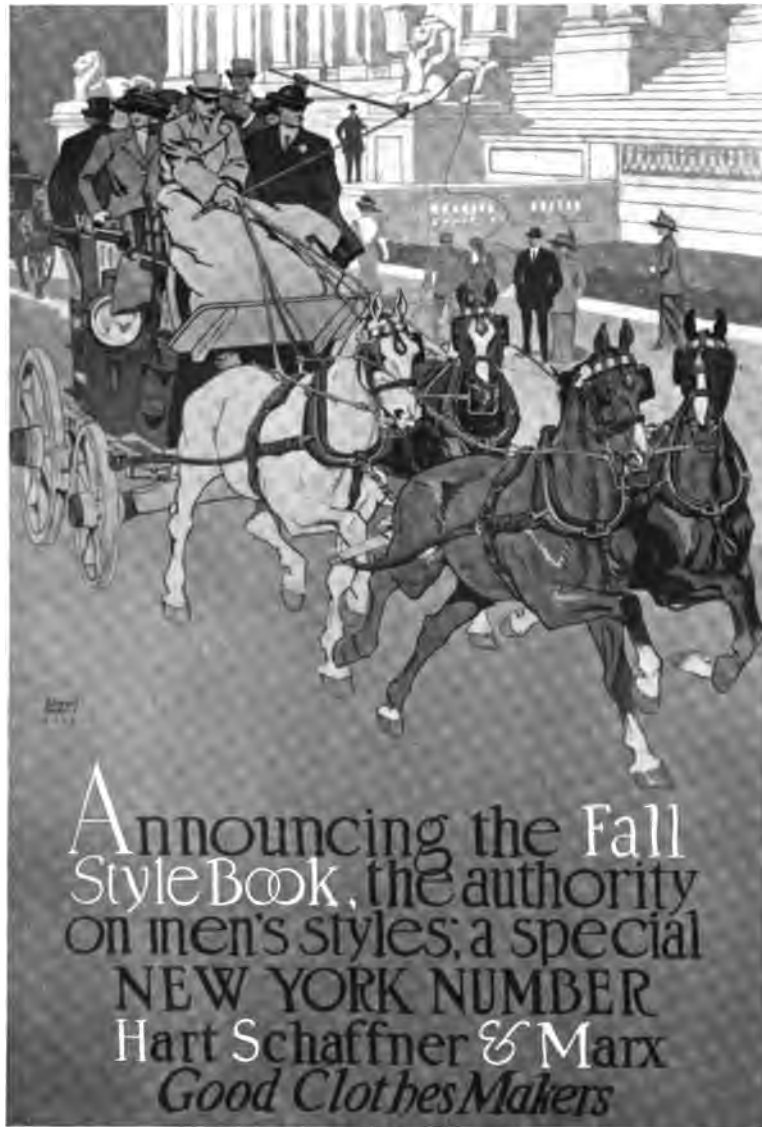
By
Edward
Penfield

Published by Alfred Bartlett: *Boston Massachusetts*

*Courtesy of and copyrighted by
Alfred Bartlett, Esq.*

STENCILED CALENDAR FOR 1904
EDWARD PENFIELD

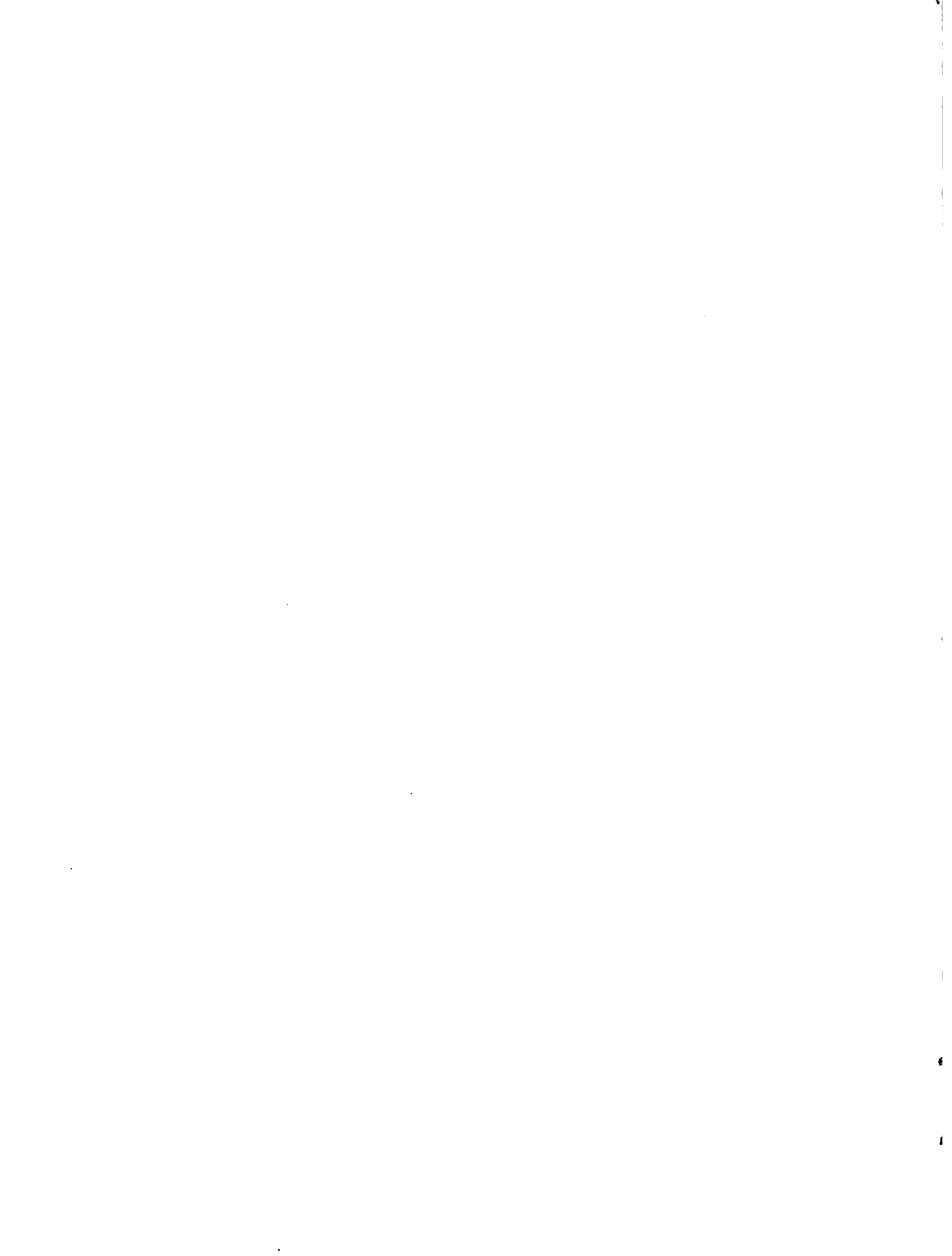
247



*Courtesy of and
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Hart, Schaffner & Marx*

HART, SCHAFFNER & MARX POSTER
EDWARD PENFIELD (1911)

249



CHAPTER VI.

Posters and the World War.

In no like period of time in the history of the world were so many posters designed and used, or so many celebrated artists engaged in the making of them as during the period of the Great War.

* "War, destroyer of many things, has brought the poster into its own, has made the poster fulfill its greatest destiny. Enthusiasts of the old days of the poster, about the time of the Worlds' Fair at Chicago, could never have foreseen that their favorite form of art, even then a very ephemeral by-product of the studios, would come to hold, as it does to-day, the forefront of the stage.

"Certainly we have proof for all time that art is capable of rising to the worldwide call to arms, that art is more than a pleasant incident in life, a non-essential form of æsthetic and intellectual entertainment.

"And the poster, so long thoughtlessly dismissed as ranging in value from the amusing product of an artist's idle hours to a 'mere advertisement,' now stands before us as a more forceful aid to nationwide publicity than any other means employed by the Government or by any war activity to reach all the people, every day, everywhere.

"The call to arms was sounded by recruiting posters; food conservation was put constantly before the nation; the loans were proclaimed and stimulated; the Red Cross set forth its vast and mericful mission—the poster came triumphantly into its own, to perform its daily, its hourly service toward winning the war."

* C. Matlack Price, "The Sun," New York, August 25, 1918, page 8.

It is, unfortunately, impossible to present, in the limits of one chapter, a comprehensive discussion of posters of the World War. Several of the principal nations involved have brought out books covering their patriotic poster work. These should be available in the libraries.*

The scope of this chapter can hope only to embrace some of the more salient features of the designing of war posters, and to illustrate as many representative examples as possible. In many instances, in order to make the most of available space and to include examples of the posters of many different war activities, four posters are shown on a single page.

France, Belgium, England and, later, Italy, began early in the war, to bring out posters, in a sequence which was subsequently duplicated in our country. First came recruiting posters, like a battle-cry, urging enlistment with all the eloquence that picture and worded message can convey. Second came the battle-cry to the civilian, in the form of successive war-loan posters, which told the people, with ever-increasing earnestness, that the war was a grim affair, and an expensive affair, and that money was needed. Third and fourth, in a scattering but incessant fire came conservation posters and posters of appeal. Food, coal and many other things must be conserved; hospitals, milk-funds, homes for destitute dependants and a host of other enterprises of aid and mercy needed help.

In France and Belgium, by reason of the conscription system, recruiting posters were unnecessary—but the artists, such as were not in the trenches, took up their brushes to promote the loans, and stir patriotism.

Not only among loan posters, but among all the posters motivated by the war, one French poster, drawn for the second loan, by Jules Abel Faivre stands out as, perhaps the most remarkable and memorable.

* The student of the war poster will find in "The Poster Magazine," of Chicago, November and December, 1920, issues, a carefully prepared War Poster Bibliography, by Harold R. Willoughby. One of the most comprehensive collections of actual war posters is that made by Princeton University.



FRENCH LOAN POSTER
JULES ABLE FAIVRE
253

Across the sheet of paper sweeps a *poilu*, full of action, heroism, spirit. The drawing has extraordinary life and *élan*, a marvelous quality of conviction and inspired realism. Caught in the moment of a forward charge, the soldier has only an instant to look back, and, with out-flung arm, a fine Gaelic gesture of bravado, to shout: "*On les aura!*"—"We'll get 'em"—to the civilians who must subscribe to the loan as their share of winning the war.

Technically, this poster affords an interesting illustration of the fact that broad, flat masses of color are not essentials in poster treatment. Because of the bigness and simplicity, as well as the remarkable action and life of the figure, the detailed manner in which it is drawn does not offer any element of detraction. An effect of large scale is further gained by the "close-up" viewpoint. When a poster is as well-drawn as this, and composed in such a large forceful manner, no "tricks" are needed to bring it out, or any violent colors. "*On les Aura*" is almost a monotone, but the shout of the heroic *poilu* will ring down the pages of poster history as long as posters are painted, and long after many meaningless "smashes of color" are forgotten.

Second, if not equal in strength, to "*On les aura*," is "*Pour le Drapeau, Pour la Victoire*"—another loan poster, in which the message is shouted by an heroic allegorical figure of France, brandishing aloft a sword and a battle-scarred flag. Behind her, in seried ranks, march the brave *poilus*, with beating drums and a forest of flags, while overhead a flock of airplanes patrols a stormy, war-racked sky. Such a poster is an immortal document of patriotism and the spirit of a nation. It is the highest plane to which the poster can be brought. It is a battle-cry, an epic and an undying record.

Four additional French loan posters are illustrated as showing certain interesting aspects of "idea" as a definite essential of poster design.



FRENCH LOAN POSTER
GEORGES SCOTT (1917)

255

The first, (*"The Loan of the Last Cartridges: One more effort, people of France!"*) shows the civilian and a small child, handing up to the embattled soldier a box of cartridges and a hand-grenade. Such a graphic linking up of the need of the soldier and the help needed from the civilian affords an excellent study in poster idea-work.

The second, featuring two figures in the traditional costumes of Alsace and Lorraine, waiting to be rescued, was designed to play upon the long-standing desire of all French people for the restoration of the lost provinces.

In the third, the wording and pictorial idea are strongly in accord: *"For France: Pour out your Gold: Gold fights for Victory,"* and a gigantic French gold-piece is seen crushing a German soldier, the Gallic cock leaping out from the design of the coin to make the attack more spirited.

The fourth is especially interesting to Americans, showing, as it does, the American Expeditionary Force, arriving on the run, with the Spirit of Victory urging them forward to relieve the three Allies, Italy, France and England, seen in the persons of three grim soldiers in the foreground. The technical inaccuracy of showing the A. E. F. in service hats instead of metal helmets does not detract seriously from the stirring effect of the poster as a whole—and not a few of our own artists made the same mistake in the early days of the war.

Many of the French artists were serving with the colors, but the roll of honor in the field of poster design displays such names as Steinlen, Faivre, Newman, Poulbot and Willette, and much fine work was done by Hansi, the Alsatian.

Of all the English recruiting posters, none has more action, or more attention-value than the splendid *"Forward to Victory,"* painted by an anonymous English artist. It is a poster which could not be ignored,



FRENCH LOAN POSTERS
AN ANONYMOUS ARTIST, AUGUSTE LEROUX,
JULES ABLE FAIVRE and LUCIEN JONAS
 257



BRITISH RECRUITING POSTER
AN ANONYMOUS ARTIST

or fail to quicken the pulse of any man who saw it. Another noteworthy English recruiting poster was the great flag, in resplendent color, with the world-wide call "*Britishers, Enlist To-day!*" This poster was used in the Dominions and Colonies, and in other countries, and based its appeal on the patriotism inspired by sight of the flag. For a poster without figures or action this is a remarkably effective one.

John Hassall, long a favorite among English poster designers, made, besides other drawings for purposes connected with the war, a charming poster for "*The Belgian Canal Boat Fund.*"

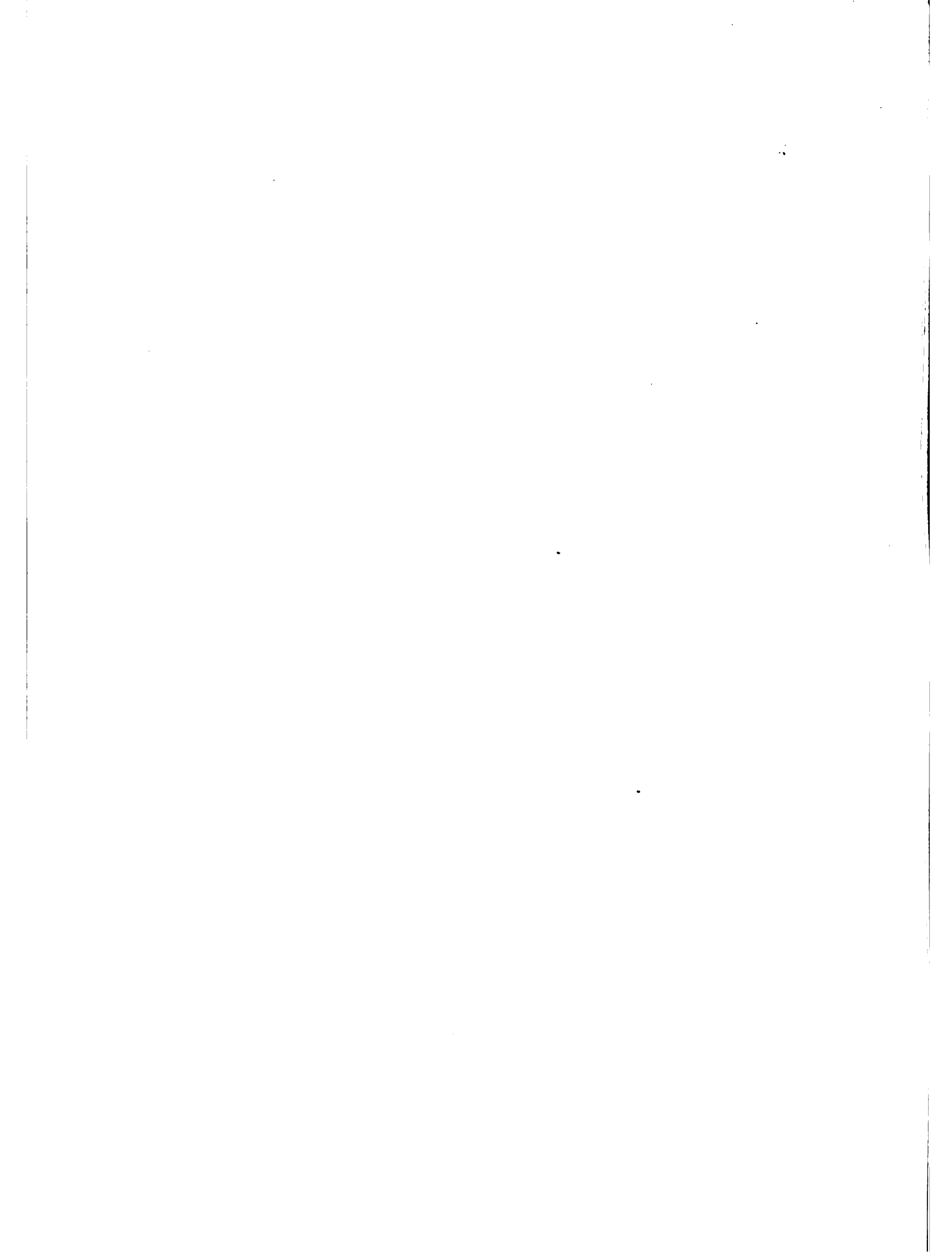
Greatest of all English poster artists, Frank Brangwyn at once dropped all other work and devoted his entire time to making war posters. These posters by Brangwyn, and those of Spencer Pryse are undoubtedly the most thoroughly artistic of all English war posters. Brangwyn, the son of a Welsh artisan, had spent most of his youth in Belgium, and it was natural for him to rise at once to Belgium's defense with a succession of inspired and inspiring posters.

The *United States Navy Recruiting Poster* by Brangwyn was done at the request of Lieutenant Henry Reuterdaahl, and shows, in Brangwyn's rugged lithographic manner, a rescue by American sailors of the survivors of a ship sunk by a German submarine.

Some idea of the vast area of activity occupied by the poster is to be had from the fact that, in the early stages of the war commissions were assigned for more than a hundred posters, of which two and a half million copies were posted in the British Isles. Many of these first posters, as was the case in this country, possessed little merit other than timeliness, but as soon as the greater artists became interested, the standard of merit rose to the heights of Brangwyn and Pryse. A general improvement, too, was distinctly noticeable in 1915, when the Ministry of Information was added to the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee.



BRITISH RECRUITING POSTER
GUY LIPSCOMBE
261





BELGIAN CANAL BOAT FUND
JOHN HASSALL
263

Frank Brangwyn, Royal Academician, Bernard Partridge, L. Ravenhill, Guy Lipscombe and G. Spenser Pryse were among the more prominent British artists who contributed their work. Pryse drew all his posters directly on stone, even at the front, and they remained throughout the war unsurpassed for strictly artistic qualities. The best known of these are "The Only Road for an Englishman," a powerful drawing of the church tower of Ypres, with soldiers, and a hauntingly beautiful poster for the Belgian Red Cross Fund.

No mention of English posters during the war, or, indeed, of English posters of several years preceding the war, would be complete without a citation of Mr. F. Pick, of the London Underground Railways Company. Mr. Pick is probably the most earnest and enthusiastic advocate of posters in England, and it was through his activity that that Government got Brangwyn's "Britain's Call to Arms" and Pryse's "Only Road for an Englishman." Under Mr. Pick's direction the London Underground Railways Company brought out a number of "morale" posters for the men in France, posters depicting cherished and familiar home scenes, scenes of the England for which they were fighting. A remarkably beautiful poster of this series, by F. Ernest Jackson, showed a peaceful village church, with country folk gathered beneath the trees, in a delicate evening haze which imparted to the whole poster almost the charm of a Corot.

Four posters from the Dominions give evidence that those far-flung members of the British Empire were not relying, for all their patriotic publicity, upon the mother country. From Canada, "*Your Chums are Fighting*," with a very pointed question, and "*Bring Him Home*," with a definite and compelling appeal. From Australia, one of the most dramatic of all the war posters. Hovering in the air, a horrified figure of Justice points to the murder of Nurse Cavell. Not a word about enlisting—only



U. S. NAVY RECRUITING POSTER

FRANK BRANGWYN

265

the brief but impelling words: "*Boys! Remember Nurse Cavell.*" Playing upon one of the most ancient of human passions—righteous vengeance for a cowardly and brutal act, this poster must take its place as one of the most effective ever designed for the purpose of causing men to voluntarily enlist in the army.

Fighting in France, among other soldiers from the four corners of the earth, were dark, wiry fighters from India. What told them of the war, and of the great need of their allegiance and support? Here, at least, is one poster which was used in India, an interesting piece of work, apparently cut on wood-blocks. At the top is the mark of the great English *raj*, recognizable anywhere in the world, and below a boldly handled head of a typical Indian soldier. It is the writer's conjecture that no standard form of lettering could be incorporated in the blocks on account of the varied dialects and letter-forms in different parts of India. These were probably printed locally, so that the poster would be comprehensible equally in whatever part of India it might appear.

Italy produced some splendid war posters, of which the *Loan poster* by Mauzan is probably the best, in either of the forms in which it was used. The illustration shows the soldier, about to go into action, pointing dramatically to the civilian who is looking at the poster, and bidding him take up the loan to his utmost. The head and pointing hand alone were made into a poster of colossal size, and widely distributed throughout Italy.

A group of unusually interesting posters were made in behalf of *Czecho-Slovakia*, by two artists working in this country—V. Preissig and Fred Chapman, the latter an American artist of high distinction in the advertising field.



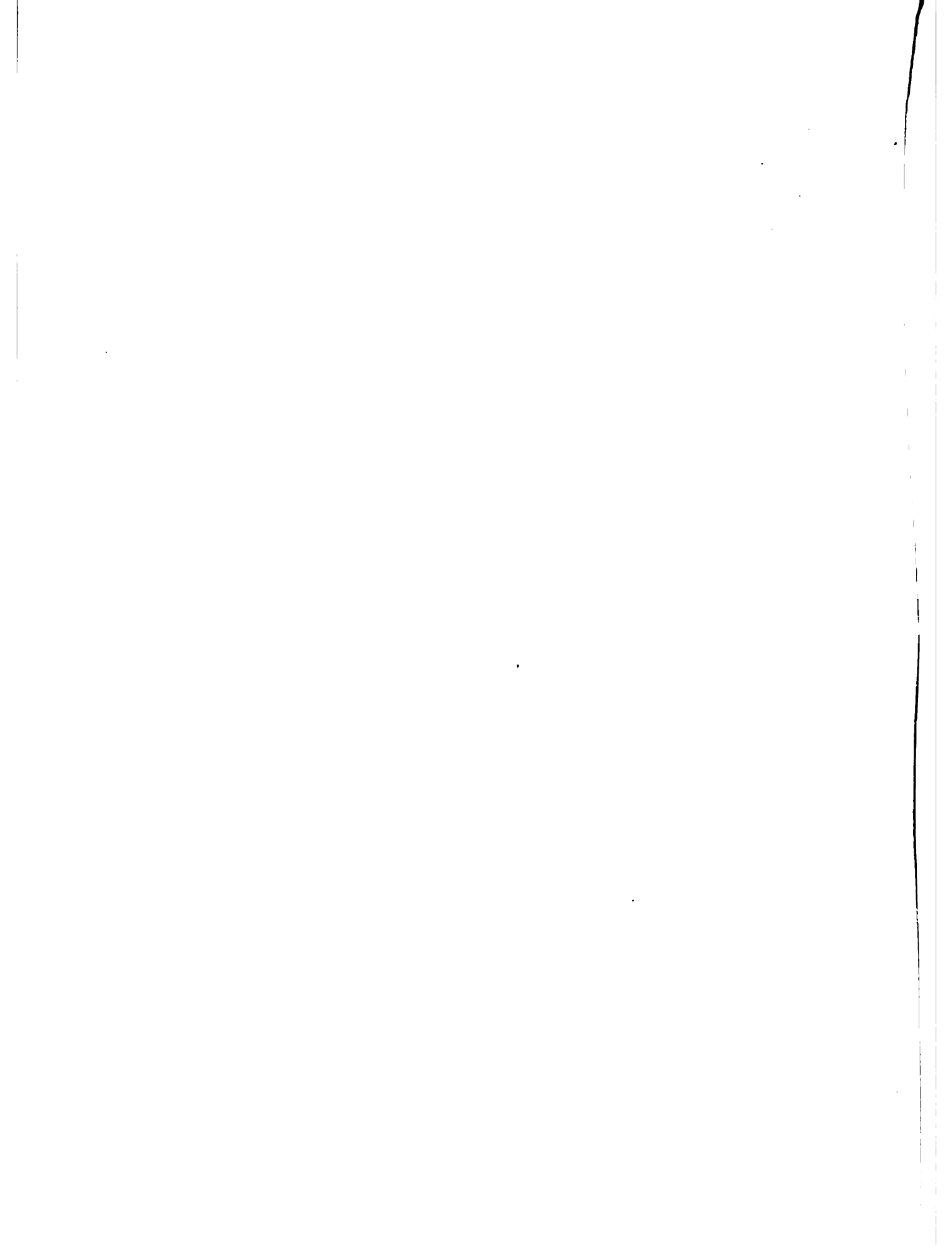
**CANADIAN
RECRUITING POSTER
AN ANONYMOUS ARTIST**

**ANGLO-INDIAN
RECRUITING POSTER
CECIL L. BURNS**

**AUSTRALIAN AND CANADIAN WORLD WAR POSTERS,
ANONYMOUS ARTISTS**



ITALIAN LOAN POSTER
N. MAUZAN
269





CZECHO-SLOVAK RECRUITING POSTER
V. PREISSIG and FRED CHAPMAN

To arouse the Polish patriots in this country, three splendid *recruiting posters* were made by Wladislaw T. Benda, who also made charming posters for the *Young Women's Christian Association* and the Red Cross.

During the early part of the war, before the disorganization of Russia, a number of striking war posters were produced. One of these is illustrated, and it offers a marked contrast to the crude and violent posters which have appeared from time to time since the Bolshevik dictatorship supplanted the old régime.

During the war, little evidence of poster-making came out of Germany, and there has been relatively little since. Posters there were, of course—but not only talent but the tools and materials needed to make posters were commandeered for other purposes. There were loans and war charities; recruiting was handled without recourse to patriotic posters. The writer has it upon first hand information that nothing of any marked degree of merit appeared in Germany during the war, and that the only new idea in poster design took the form of graphic statistical charts, showing the shortages and needs in many essential products. If anything, the stress of war served chiefly to intensify and exaggerate that heavy quality, akin to brutality, that bids fair to characterize the German poster of post-war days. The war added no inspirational quality, no note of nobility or spiritual uplift to the rendering of the German poster, and in many instances the poster was employed rather as a means of inspiring hatred of England than patriotic fervor for the Fatherland.

The newest poster work from Germany shows, too, a tendency toward the grotesque which is unlikely to commend it in this country, where advertising has reached the status of a serious profession.



**Śladami Ojców Naszych
w Szeregach Armii Polskiej
za Ojczyznę i Wolność**

**FOLLOWING THE PATHS OF OUR FATHERS IN THE RANKS
OF THE POLISH ARMY FOR MOTHERLAND AND FREEDOM**

**POLISH RECRUITING POSTER
WŁADISŁAW T. BENDA**

273



RUSSIAN LOAN POSTER
ANONYMOUS ARTIST
275

The history of the poster in America's share of the war is an inspiring one, and a record of lasting credit to the extraordinary group of artists who enlisted their services.

"In April, 1917, when the call to arms was sounded from coast to coast, in place of Paul Revere to waken the sleeping countryside, there was chosen the poster—the only messenger which can go everywhere among us, and still remain everywhere with us." *

At first, as was quite natural, there was great confusion in the matter of posters, and no direction or plan for their production. The inevitable result was the appearance of many posters which could in no artistic sense be preserved as a credit to our poster designing abilities.

One great, dominating figure, Charles Dana Gibson, rose to the occasion, and, in April, 1917, called together at a dinner the most prominent artists and illustrators available in and about New York City. With the warm assurance of their whole-hearted support, Mr. Gibson offered the services of the entire group to the Government at Washington, and the offer was accepted.

This active and enthusiastic group, functioning under The Division of Public Information, became officially known as the Division of Pictorial Publicity, and unofficially as "Gibson's Committee." Unlike many committees, the executives were all active, and all accepted their places with the firm intention of working hard. The names must ever stand high in any record of American poster history: Charles Dana Gibson, Frank D. Casey, C. B. Falls, Henry Reuterdaahl, Louis Fancher, C. D. Williams, R. J. Wildhack and F. G. Cooper.

The specific manner in which the committee worked is as highly worthy of record as the names of the men who composed it. During the

*C. Matlack Price, in "Patriotic Posters," a Monograph issued by the National Committee of Patriotic Societies.



ENLIST TODAY AT
628 SOUTH STATE STREET, CHICAGO, ILL.



CONSULT YOUR LOCAL DRAFT BOARD. READ THE ILLUSTRATED BOOKLET AT ANY RECRUITING OFFICE OR WRITE TO THE SIGNAL OFFICER OF THE ARMY, WASHINGTON, D. C.



OPEN TO FIGHTING MEN ALL CLASSES 18 TO 35
TENTH FLOOR AT 19 WEST 4TH STREET

AMERICAN RECRUITING POSTERS
C. B. FALLS, ALBERT STERNER, CHARLES
LIVINGSTON BULL and AUGUST HUTAFF

entire period of this Country's participation in the war, the whole group, headed by the committee, met regularly once a week, first at Keene's Chop House, and, later, at the Salmagundi Club, with Mr. Gibson as chairman, or, on the rare occasions of his absence from town, with Mr. Cass Gilbert, the architect, as chairman. At each meeting Mr. Casey reported the requests for posters, cartoons or illustrations received from the Government, or from patriotic organizations throughout the country. Each request was put in charge of a "Captain," whose duty it was to see that idea-sketches were received, on time, from such of the artists as were judged best fitted to carry out the work. These idea-sketches were then passed through the committee headquarters to Washington, and, when approved, were promptly executed in finished paintings. The activity of the Division of Pictorial Publicity needs no proof beyond the figures of its output. Seven hundred posters were made to serve the publicity needs of fifty Government and civilian war needs. Of the hundred and eighty-seven artists actively enrolled under the Division, not all made posters: there were, for instance, thirty-three of the country's most prominent cartoonists. Thirty-seven artists and illustrators devoted their entire work to the Navy, and the following members were officially commissioned Captains and sent overseas to record, pictorially, the life and exploits of the American Expeditionary Forces: J. Andre Smith, Ernest Peixotto, Harry Townsend, Wallace Morgan, George Harding, W. I. Aylward, Harvey Dunn and W. I. Duncan. Henry Reuterdahl was accorded the rank of a Lieutenant Commander in the Navy. In the complete list of the members of the Division could be read a roster of the greatest names in the field of illustration in this country, with not a few conspicuous painters interspersed among them.

For this record of the vigorous work of the Division of Pictorial Publicity, an apt conclusion is found in a quotation from the story of its

Lend
the way they
Fight



Buy Bonds
to your **UTMOST**

HALT the HUN!



BUY U.S. GOVERNMENT BONDS
THIRD LIBERTY LOAN



Come
On!

buy more
LIBERTY BONDS



"Lend Him a Hand"
BUY
LIBERTY BONDS

AMERICAN LIBERTY LOAN POSTERS
E. M. ASHE, HENRY RALEIGH, WALTER
WHITEHEAD, and CHARLES SARKA

work, taken from the book which was distributed to the members and their guests at the "Victory Dinner," given on February 14th, 1919. "Being chosen to speak, through their work, to the millions of their countrymen, the artists felt a great sense of responsibility, which bound them into a harmonious unit. All worked together in the common cause, sank personal considerations, gave and received advice. A fine spirit of helpfulness prevailed, which aimed at the goal of high excellence in all commissions executed.

"The steady appearance of the Division's work became a feature of the war, not only stirring patriotism, but awakening in the public mind the importance of the artist. It was a wholesale education to the country in that the Division made the bill-boards safe for art, the work standing out in sharp contrast to the commercial disfigurements of the past.

"For once the artist was permitted to work out his own ideas with unfettered imagination, and the unhampered results were so encouraging that it should have a permanent effect upon publishers and editors in their relations with artists in the future.

"As specialists called in to assist the Government, the artists were not even 'dollar-a-year' men. Unlike those whose business can run profitably without them, they gave freely of their time and talent, their only reward being the privilege of service."

Nor, in placing on record the services of this group of artists, should the publishers be overlooked in a record of patriotism in the field of art which concerns itself with publicity. Scores of magazines of the greatest national circulations gave their covers to patriotic publicity which incalculably supplemented the work which was being done by the nationally distributed posters.

The illustrations in this chapter necessarily limited in number in comparison with the immense output from which to select, have been



BOY SCOUT LIBERTY LOAN POSTER
J. C. LEYENDECKER
281

carefully chosen as representing as helpfully as possible the characteristic work of the more conspicuous artists, as well as the varied purposes for which war posters were made. The following brief comments, therefore, cannot be taken as in any sense complete, but rather as supplementary text.

The U. S. Marines were fortunate in having what virtually amounted to the undivided work of C. B. Falls. This artist, one of the most able poster technicians in this country to-day, coined a striking characterization of the poster which holds especially true for war posters: "A poster should be to the eye what a shouted command is to the ear." The "*Books Wanted*" poster by Falls has been cited by many competent critics as the best poster of our entire war output, or, in fact, one of the best posters ever done in this country. It is, beyond question, a fine piece of work, and will live, as a poster, long after the period which inspired it.

The poster for attracting recruits to the Tank Corps loses much in the absence of its lurid color scheme, but could lose nothing in its vigorous action or unescapable "attention value." The belligerent black cat was the unofficial badge and emblem of the tank men, and "*Treat 'em Rough*" their slogan—excellent material for a striking poster, and an opportunity by no means missed by August Hutaff, who made this one.

The special and long-recognized ability of Charles Livingston Bull as a bird and animal artist made him the logical choice for two fine posters in which the eagle dominates idea and design. In the example illustrated, "*Join the Army Air Service,*" the American eagle is seen in mortal combat with the German eagle—an inspiring and easily-read poster allegory. In a poster for War Savings Stamps, a great American eagle, on a lofty nest, is hatching a brood of airplanes for the defence of its country.

Albert Sterner, painter, lithographer and illustrator, made several vigorous and impressive though somewhat sombre posters, of which the Navy recruiting poster "*Over There,*" is splendidly typical.



AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION POSTER

C. B. FALLS

283

On another page are grouped four Liberty Loan posters, of which Charles Sarka's "*Lend Him a Hand*" proved the most popular. It is an admirable poster because it conveys a definite message directly, simply and graphically. Its message, indeed, was considered so potent by the Liberty Loan officials that for some time it was used as virtually a "trade mark" for the whole Liberty Loan campaign.

In all of the four Loan posters in this group the soldier is portrayed as the civilian's inspiration to subscribe. It is interesting to compare the difference in technique between the posters of Sarka, Morgan and Ashe, all three of whom are illustrators, and the one by Whitehead, who is primarily a poster designer.

J. C. Leyendecker reached an audience of over two million with a succession of brilliant and inspiring patriotic covers for the Saturday Evening Post, and made but few actual posters. One very fine example, however was *The Boy Scout-Liberty Loan poster*, in which the great Scout Association is seen graphically linked with the country's war need in a semi-allegorical group suggesting a motive for an inspiring statue. Its statu-
esque quality, its lack of action, makes slightly against its purely poster quality, but its nobility of idea and its superb execution place it among the finest posters of the war.

A group of four posters by F. G. Cooper demonstrate the tremendous effectiveness of vigorous lettering and of this type of poster (excepting "*Save a Loaf a Week*") with no pictorial element in its design. Cooper must be put on record as one of the greatest masters of lettering among contemporary poster designers, and these posters, printed in red and black, are among the most striking achievements of the artists of the Division of Pictorial Publicity. Incidentally, these posters also prove Cooper's contention that "lower case" (or small letters as distinguished from capital letters) is far easier to read than a legend composed entirely



Save a loaf
a week
help win
the war

U.S. FOOD ADMINISTRATION

food

- 1- buy it with thought
- 2- cook it with care
- 3- use less wheat & meat
- 4- buy local foods
- 5- serve just enough
- 6- use what is left

don't waste it.

U.S. FOOD ADMINISTRATION

save

- 1- wheat
use more corn
- 2- meat
use more fish & beans
- 3- fats
use just enough
- 4- sugar
use syrups

and serve
the cause of freedom

U.S. FOOD ADMINISTRATION

Order your coal

now

Get it out of
Uncle Sam's way
— he needs
the railroads
for the war

8

of capitals. The truth of this rests upon fact and not upon theory. The vigor and character of the actual letter-forms themselves make up for the absence of the graphic, or pictorial element.

Two poster designers and two illustrators are represented in a group of four more Food Administration posters. Illian's "*Keep It Coming*" illustrating a long convoy of motor trucks conveys graphically to the civilian mind the need of a continuous supply of food at the front. The suggestion of cold and discomfort added by the snow completes the whole powerful suggestion of the civilian's duty in personal sacrifice.

The market basket, with a silhouette of a field battery in the background, and the direct, simple injunction: "*Food is Ammunition*," by John E. Sheridan, is a fine study in simplicity of idea, well-painted.

The Wallace Morgan food conservation poster, "*Feed a Fighter*" is a splendidly vigorous piece of work, in which illustration technique is raised to the fighting strength essential in a war poster. It is an excellent example of the kind of drawing which has so much inherent strength that color would add no great value to it. It is stronger, in fact, in the black and white in which it was printed.

In the poster depicting the familiar type of restaurant *gourmand*, Crawford Young's "*Sir*," the art and power of direct and vigorous caricature is demonstrated as a highly effective means of achieving a successful poster.

The Red Cross afforded to many artists their greatest poster inspirations, and the artists' response to that organization's needs was both generous and effective.

"*The Greatest Mother in the World*," by A. E. Foringer, was generally conceded to be the most popular and generally successful of all the Red Cross posters, and had a tremendous circulation. Its human appeal, with the added appeal of the phrase, probably outweighed its strictly



UNITED STATES FOOD ADMINISTRATION POSTERS
 CRAWFORD YOUNG, JOHN E. SHERIDAN,
 WALLACE MORGAN and GEORGE ILLIAN

poster qualities in achieving the unprecedented acclaim that was accorded to it, and this acclaim was so great that, like Sarka's "*Lend Him a Hand*" figure in the Liberty Loan poster, the Red Cross adopted "The Greatest Mother" as a "trade mark" figure. The poster as printed was a monotone of soft brown, with the cross and the two horizontal bands in red.

The quaint charm of the work of Jessie Wilcox Smith was not lost in her "*Have You a Red Cross Service Flag*" nor does it show any absence of poster value because of its characteristically delicate color scheme. The appeal of the child is universal—but there are only a few artists who are capable of drawing such appealing children as those of Miss Smith.

In Harrison Fisher's *Red Cross poster* there is an interesting demonstration of the compelling power of a picture, without any worded appeal. What could words add? At a glance we know that it is a Red Cross poster, and that an ideally beautiful Red Cross nurse, in service with the army, is asking for contributions to the fund. This poster, also, was accorded great popularity, and was of definite aid in the "drive" during which it appeared. Mr. Stanford Briggs said that "A picture is the shortest distance between an idea and a man's mind." Here, certainly, is a wordless poster which proves and illustrates this interesting statement.

Albert Herter's Red Cross poster, "*In the Name of Mercy*," affords another illustration of the inherent strength of a good drawing devoid of color. The cross on the nurse's sleeve is in red, the rest of the poster is in black and it is an admirably fine piece of work.

In the summer of 1917 the Emergency Fleet Corporation of the United States Shipping Board held a competition for posters to recruit workers for the shipyards, and to keep up the fighting morale of the men already at work. The poster, "*Smash the Hun*," by E. Hopper which won the first prize is a fine example of every poster essential. The color scheme is simple—a yellow sky, with blue silhouette of the shipyard and



AMERICAN RED CROSS POSTERS
A. E. FORINGER, JESSIE WILCOX SMITH,
HARRISON FISHER and ALBERT HERTER
289

a sinister touch of red on the threatening enemy bayonets. The figure is big, dominating, vigorous and full of action, the idea simple, graphic and symbolic, with a corresponding slogan of excellent comprehension value and memory value. An actual worker posed for the figure, and a thoroughly fine poster was produced.

The War Savings Stamp poster, "*Help Them,*" was a prize winner in another patriotic poster competition, and is a good illustration of an "idea poster." It brings graphically to the civilian a grasp of the definite relation of his investment in stamps to the actual war-needs of the men at the front. The war savings stamps in the foreground gradually merge into the belt of cartridges which is being consumed by an American machine gun in action.

The other two posters shown on the same page are strong examples of the poster technique of illustrators. The appeal to the foreign-born citizen of America by W. L. Taylor's "*America Gave You,*" is one of the finest black and white lithographs made in this country during the war, and George Wright's ship-building poster, "*Hip, Hip,*" made through the Division of Pictorial Publicity is full of action and patriotic stimulus.

In addition to Gordon Grant's several Red Cross posters, one of which is shown on another page, the same artist made an extensive series of small two-color posters which were distributed throughout the army training camps after the signing of the armistice, intended to keep up the morale of the thousands who were awaiting their discharges from the service. Technically these "morale posters" were excellent, but their appeal, in many instances was keyed a little too near the ideal of "being good and nicely behaved boys" to command the full respect of the average soldier.

In the W. T. Benda poster for the *Young Women's Christian Association*, an appeal of the utmost charm, refinement and simplicity was achieved, few posters of the time winning such unanimous popularity.



**UNITED STATES SHIPPING BOARD, WAR SAVINGS STAMPS
AND COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION POSTERS
E. HOPPER, CASPER EMERSON, GEORGE
WRIGHT and F. WALTER TAYLOR**

One of the best of James Montgomery Flagg's War posters, "*Vive La France*"—for Bastille Day—was, from its nature, one of least used. It is admirable in its quick, vigorous execution, and in its graphic appeal for unity and the common cause among the allies.

Edward Penfield, veteran among American poster artists, was not by any means absent from the roll-call when patriotic posters were needed. His most interesting posters were for the "land army," or war-gardening appeal—posters executed in his familiar manner, simple, direct, clean and large in effect. The best, probably, is the group of girls in the Y. W. C. A. "*Girl on the Land*," (a group by no means unbecomingly uniformed) with a fine swing of action and motion and two of Penfield's inimitable farm horses. For the Food Administration, "*Save Wheat*" is another fine Penfield poster of three French peasant women in brightly colored costume, against a dark background, dragging a heavy harrow across a field. Penfield also made an extensive series of war poster covers for "Colliers," beginning in 1914.

H. Devitt Welsh, a member of the Division of Pictorial Publicity, is represented by an interesting poster rendering of old Independence Hall in Philadelphia, in a poster designed with a blank for the insertion of local dates and places where the "*Four-Minute Men*" were to appear.

Summarizing the output of posters in this country, it must be admitted that notwithstanding the general high average of merit attained, when the last artist laid down his brush we were left with but few posters that are likely to be immortal. And psychologists will say that, for the most part, the Spirit of America was missed. It is not an easy thing to do . . . but the Spirit of France is in Faivre's "*On les Aura*."

If one were asked: "What did the whole output of posters tell us?", the answer might fairly be that it told us of a wealth of hitherto unexercised poster-making ability among our illustrators and artists.



FOUR MINUTE MEN POSTER
H. DEVITT WELSH
293

And even more strikingly, it told us once and for all time the incalculable value of the poster as a publicity medium. At no time in the world's history were so many posters produced, at no time was the need for nation-wide publicity so vital, at no time had posters such a tremendous opportunity to prove their power in getting results.

Taking the war posters of Europe and America together, certainly the war added a vivid and voluminous chapter to poster design, and one which, in view of all the circumstances of necessary haste and tempermental tension, will stand for all time as both esthetically and patriotically creditable to the nations and their artists who made that great chapter.



**RED CROSS, YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION,
BASTILLE DAY AND SCHOOL GARDEN ARMY POSTERS
GORDON GRANT, W. T. BENDA, EDWARD PENFIELD
and JAMES MONTGOMERY FLAGG**



The Girl on the Land
Serves the Nation's Need
apply **Y.W.C.A.**
Land Service Committee.



YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION AND UNITED
STATES FOOD ADMINISTRATION POSTERS
EDWARD PENFIELD
297

CHAPTER VII.

Some Magazine Covers.

With regard to our sanction to consider certain cover-designs recently appearing on our magazines, one has made the observation that since many of them present covers of considerable superficial area, and since these are hung conspicuously on news-stands with a view of attracting attention, they differ in no essential features from posters proper, and may consistently come under discussion as such.

It must not be supposed, however, that the purpose of this chapter is to state, or even imply, that a magazine cover should *necessarily* be a poster—it is rather to suggest that where such an intention has existed on the part of the editors, that the cover be a *good* poster and present as many *poster values* as possible.

It was stated and reiterated earlier that actual size in a poster design is its least important element, and that its most important element is a suggestive proportion which will admit of reduction to the size of a postage stamp, or enlargement to the most expansive fence-placard known to bill-posters, with no loss of poster value. This is really the simplest and most readily applied of all tests, and the examples of magazine covers in this chapter may serve to illustrate graphically exactly how much a design of actually small dimensions may partake of all the essentials of a poster of any size whatever. For again let it be said that the *amount of space* occupied by a poster is the most superficial thing about it, and has no bearing whatever upon the stupidity or cleverness of the actual design itself.

Further, in this magazine field, so much excellent and unfortunately

transient work has appeared, illustrating many of the most interesting moods of our cleverest designers, that a lasting record of their more successful efforts should have some value of its own. The limitations of this chapter, however, dealing as it does exclusively with the *poster-values* of certain cover-designs, must perforce exclude many examples which possess no qualifications other than an intrinsic interest in their subject.

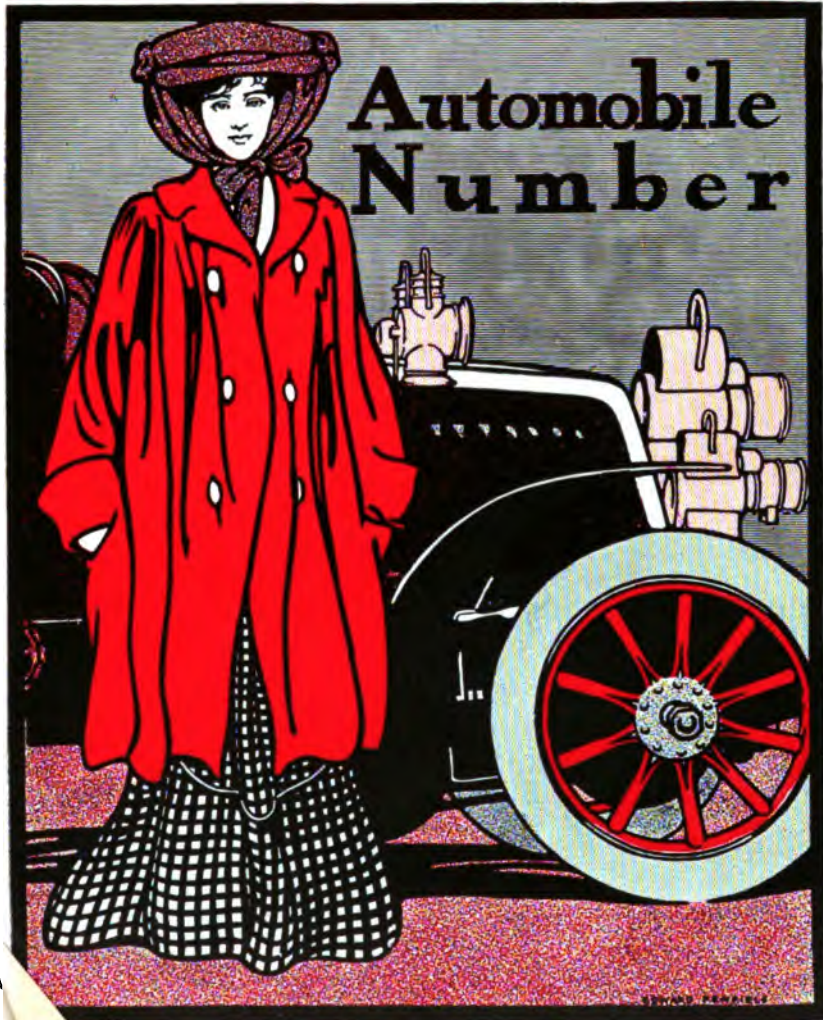
In Mr. Penfield's cover for "*Collier's Weekly*," January, 1903, all poster essentials are evident in an extremely striking array. It presents a design of simplicity and strength in idea, composition, line, and color, with lettering of supremely adequate scale and as original, characteristic and informal as it is legible. This cover, indeed, is among Mr. Penfield's happiest achievements in this miniature poster-field. It is to be remarked that the observations of his rendering of automobiles in general are admirably illustrated in this particular example.

The "*Collier's*" cover of the girl walking with a Russian wolf-hound hardly requires comment regarding its obviously excellent poster values. It is interesting to remark, however, that it illustrates Mr. Penfield's first change of technique—of which the red-coated equestrienne of "*The Saturday Evening Post*" is an example as well, the motor cover suggesting rather his much earlier work. Nor should the types of these three girls be passed without remark, for they possess that distinctive personality of all Mr. Penfield's poster-people. One drives her own motor-car, and condescends to pose for us, to our lasting delight; another smartly tailored, briskly keeps pace with her dog, for both are thorough-breds, while the third would seem to be her own M.F.H., capably mustering her hounds to the meet—yet all three are compellingly feminine, and, one likes to fancy, thoroughly American.

In the Windmill cover ("*Collier's*") is presented at once a strong

COLLIER'S

New York, January 17th 1903

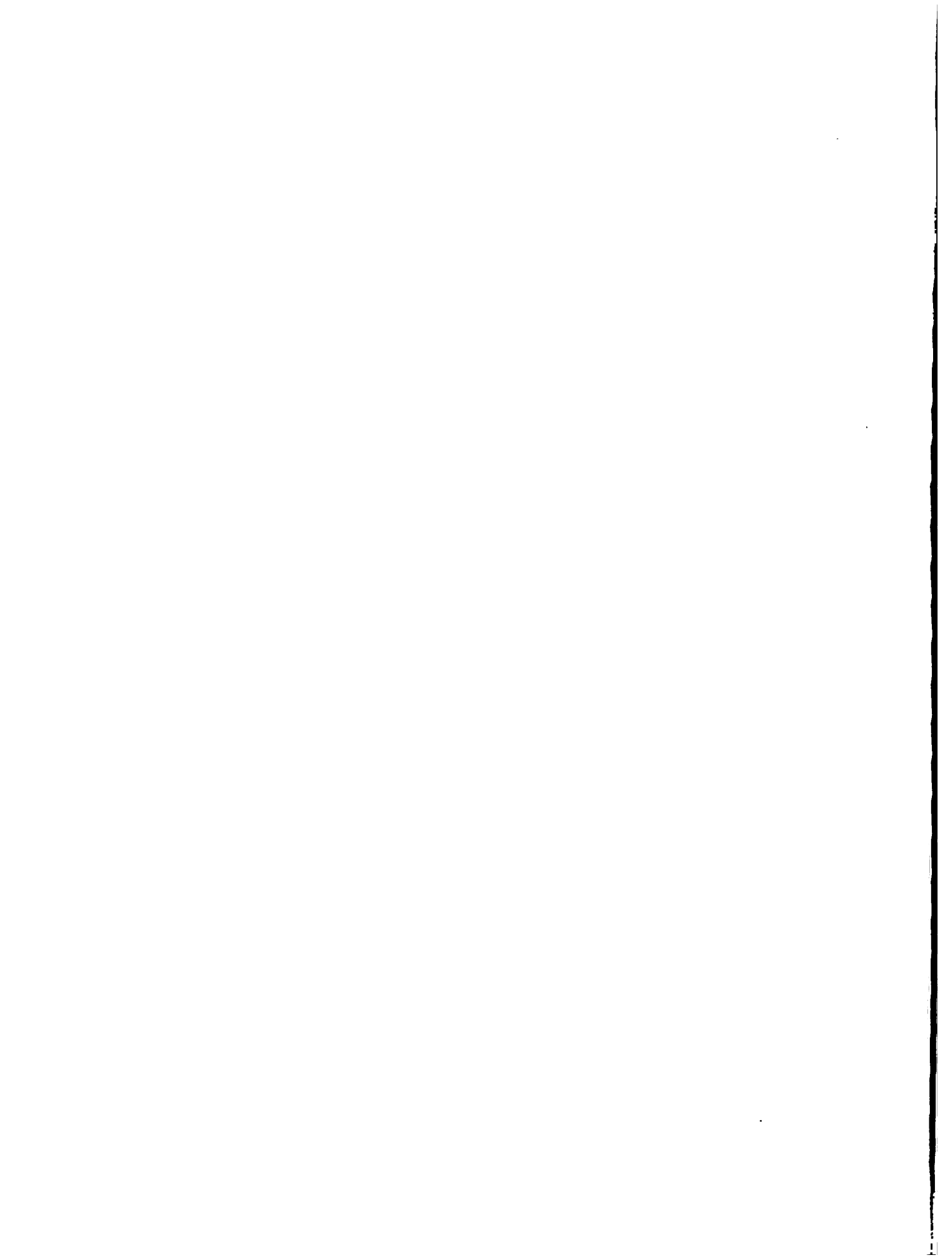


COLLIER'S WEEKLY COVER, JANUARY 17, 1903

*Courtesy of and Copyrighted by
Collier's Weekly*

EDWARD PENFIELD

301



Collier's



*Courtesy of and
Copyrighted by
Collier's Weekly*

COLLIER'S WEEKLY COVER
November 10, 1906
EDWARD PENFIELD
303

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

An Illustrated Weekly Magazine
Founded A. D. 1773 by Benj. Franklin

OCTOBER 31, 1903

FIVE CENTS THE COPY



*Courtesy of and
Copyrighted by
The Curtis Publishing Company*

SATURDAY EVENING POST COVERS

October 31, 1903

EDWARD PENFIELD

305



*Courtesy of and
Copyrighted by
Collier's Weekly*

COLLIER'S WEEKLY COVER

March 23, 1901

EDWARD PENFIELD

307

poster with vigorous letters, and a shorthand architectural study as broad and as clean in detail as it is solid and convincing in execution. Nor does the touch of the "personal equation" in the merry little group of figures detract from the directness of the motive, but cleverly serves rather, the purpose of giving at sight an unconscious yet correct sense-impression of the actual size of the mill, which in turn, suggests that highly desirable element—that sense of a presentation of an idea larger than the confines of the sheet. The design illustrates interestingly the technique developed in the third period of Mr. Penfield's work—the style of the "Holland Sketches", while the Spanish Horseman (*Collier's*), is no less characteristic of his last type of work in Spain.

The features of this last type, as carried out in this example, are a more complex presentation of color—considerable range of subtle tones and general warmth throughout—and a general precision of carefully studied detail, neither, however, in any degree destroying the breadth of conception or the strong poster value of the whole. In this drawing the expanse of flat plain is admirably suggested, at the first glance, by the low sky-line.

It is a long call from the plains of Andalusia to Fifth Avenue, in front of the Holland House. The "*Metropolitan*" cover, nevertheless, rings as true as the other, for the waiting coach, and the three truly typical Graces of Manhattan, briskly walking up-town, strike a note at once sincere and accurate. The spirit of the thing as a whole is there, and as usual, the types are the same frank, unaffected representations of the best that is in America. It is interesting from the poster standpoint as being a clear, simple rendering of a rather elaborate subject. It is a *translation* in a poster-medium of what might have been too elaborate had it been done by another than Mr. Penfield. The coach is the accessory designed to give the sense-impression of the particular street—and if it seems to



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COLLIER'S WEEKLY COVER

July 11, 1908

EDWARD PENFIELD

309





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COLLIER'S WEEKLY COVER

January 11, 1908

EDWARD PENFIELD

311

METROPOLITAN MAGAZINE

June 1909

Price 15 cents



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The Metropolitan Magazine*

METROPOLITAN MAGAZINE COVER
June, 1909
EDWARD PENFIELD

313

METROPOLITAN MAGAZINE



THE METROPOLITAN MAGAZINE CO
35 & 7 WEST 29th STREET NEW YORK

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METROPOLITAN MAGAZINE COVER

July, 1905
EDWARD PENFIELD

315

confuse the figures a bit, it is equally apparent upon more careful consideration, that it is not really a background, but an essential part of the main group. It is a picture in strong "poster style," with lettering adequate in relative scale, and pleasingly disposed.

Of the same order is the cover which makes one feel instinctively the idea of driving from a railroad station out to a country-house, through smiling fields and under summer skies—a group of sense-impressions resulting from the absolute frankness, informality and salient sincerity of both the subject and its presentation. It is graphic, and beneath its apparent simplicity, full of that subtle charm so characteristic of all Mr. Penfield's work.

For some years one closely associated the styles of Guernsey Moore and J. J. Gould, an admirable example of the latter's work being a cover for "*The Saturday Evening Post*," featuring the first of two papers on contemporary Russian statesmen. It is hard to find words adequate to do justice to this drawing. To merely state that it possesses "poster-value" is absurd—to say that it is "clever" is futile. It is tremendous, it is colossal, it is sublime. It is so powerful, so full of inherent, potential strength, both in subject and treatment, that it could successfully ignore one of the basic coefficients of a poster—it *could be a strong poster without a single line of lettering*. This may seem an extraordinary statement, but even a cursory glance at the illustration will cause that *sheer strength*, aided by unbalanced composition, bold line, simple coloring and gigantic suggested proportion to take instant effect, and to create a mental shock that cannot be forgotten. Perhaps the thing is unique. Certainly it is hard to recall a mere drawing, purporting to be a poster, which possesses to so great degree such irresistible qualities of enormous power.

While this cover was the actual work of Mr. Gould, in the matter

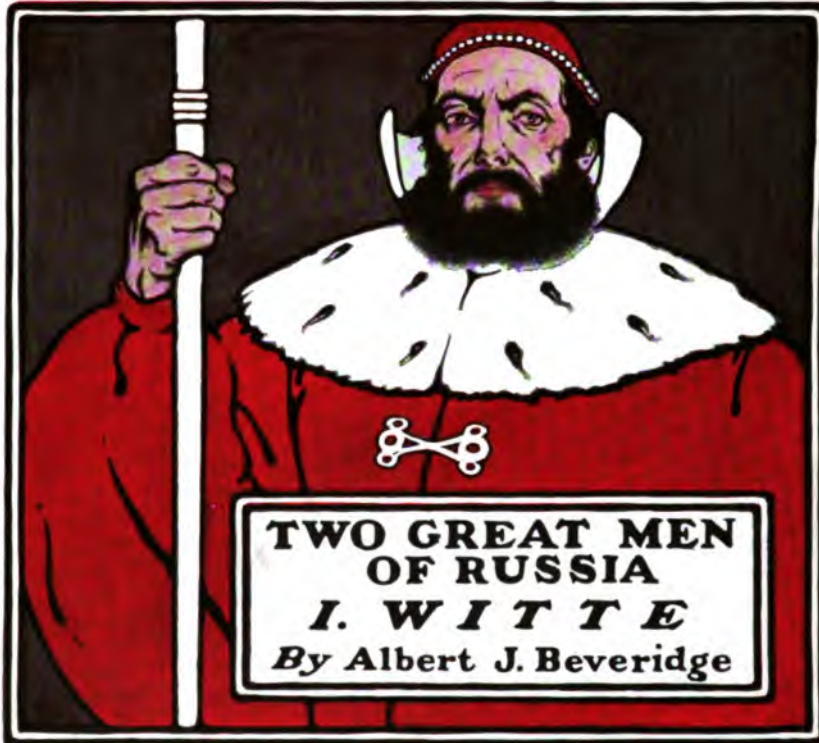
THE MILLIONAIRES—By David Graham Phillips

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

An Illustrated Weekly Magazine
Founded A. D. 1728 by Benj. Franklin

JULY 26, 1902

FIVE CENTS THE COPY



THE CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY, PHILADELPHIA

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SATURDAY EVENING POST COVER

July 26, 1902

J. J. GOULD AND GUERNSEY MOORE

317

of its execution, the design was the work of Guernsey Moore. These two designers, both Philadelphians, worked together for some time under the name of "Peter Fountain," a fictitious personage who aroused attention by reason of the very interesting quality of his work, which appeared on the covers of "The Saturday Evening Post," and by his disappearance from the field in a mysterious manner, no less sudden or unheralded than his *début*. While much work was done jointly by Messrs. Gould and Moore, much was presented either anonymously or with a combined monogram of "J. J. G.," and "G. M." An example of Mr. Moore's quaint humor appeared in the rather cryptic "signatures" of a cover-design for "The Saturday Evening Post" some years ago. The design was in the nature of a very quiet parody of some of Mr. Parrish's work, and showed a figure in the familiar pointed cap, with its long feather, and wearing tabard, jerkin, and long, soft shoes. In the background were impossible castles and castlettes, precariously perched on isolated pinnacles of rock, which broke out here and there with unlikely trees. And woven into the decorative border of a pouch carried by the figure, were the various initials "A. D.," "H. P.," "M. P.," and "G. M.," indicating that the credit of the whole might be severally divided amongst Albrecht Dürer, Howard Pyle, Maxfield Parrish, and Guernsey Moore!

Mr. Moore's revival of Colonial costumes and details is admirably shown in his quaint and freely colored sedan-chair cover-design for "*Collier's*," handled in distinctly a poster style, which shows the poster possibilities of the magazine cover.

The cover by F. X. Leyendecker—a *modiste's* assistant momentarily posing in a customer's hat—presents a charm of subject and a clean delicacy of rendering that are exquisite. The various textures involved are admirably translated, and *cleverness* speaks from every line of the draughtsmanship.

Collier's

**AUTOMOBILE
NUMBER 33**



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COLLIER'S WEEKLY COVER
January 16, 1909
GUERNSEY MOORE
319

J. C. Leyendecker's covers have continued to enliven the Saturday Evening Post on all such occasions as Christmas, New Year's, Independence Day, Thanksgiving and the like, and seem, if anything, to increase in brilliancy and sureness. Few artists so ably understand both the limitations and the possibilities of painting for two-color process reproduction in red and black.

The most noteworthy F. X. Leyendecker covers since the old days of "Collier's" have been several beautifully done for "*Vanity Fair*," based on the ever-intriguing adventures of Pierrot, Harlequin and Columbine. The finesse of execution characteristic of the work of "F. X." is exemplified in the illustration.

It is interesting to study the very early work of J. C. Leyendecker as a student in Paris—as far back as 1897. This work was in strong poster style, with less of the illustrative element of his present drawings. There are suggestions of Steinlen, and much of the feeling of other contemporary French designers in these old sketches, and Mr. Leyendecker's absolute freedom from any precedent to-day shows that sincere and vigorous originality of technique will assert itself over any amount of collateral study or influences of student days.

Perhaps the nearest approach to these "*Inland Printer*" cover designs in the present work of J. C. Leyendecker, is to be found in his extremely clever sketch for the "*Bohemian Number*" of "*Judge*." There is a care-free element in it—an *abandon* suggesting Chéret. It is eminently appropriate both in detail and in treatment, for there can be no question either as to the "Bohemian" qualities of the figures or the unconstrained technique of their delineation. Perhaps it is not going too far to say that in no poster ever designed in this country has there appeared so much of the Continental European *spirit* of vivacious spontaneity, so much of the gaiety of the French. On the actual drawing it is unnecessary

McCLURE'S MAGAZINE

· MAY · 1910 ·
FIFTEEN CENTS



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McCLURE'S MAGAZINE COVER

May, 1910

F. X. LEYENDECKER

321



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VANITY FAIR COVER
January, 1917
F. X. LEYENDECKER
323



JULY 1897

TWENTY CENTS



FEBRUARY 1911

PRICE 20 CENTS



THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

An Illustrated Weekly Magazine
 Founded and Edited by Benj. Franklin

DEC. 21, 1911

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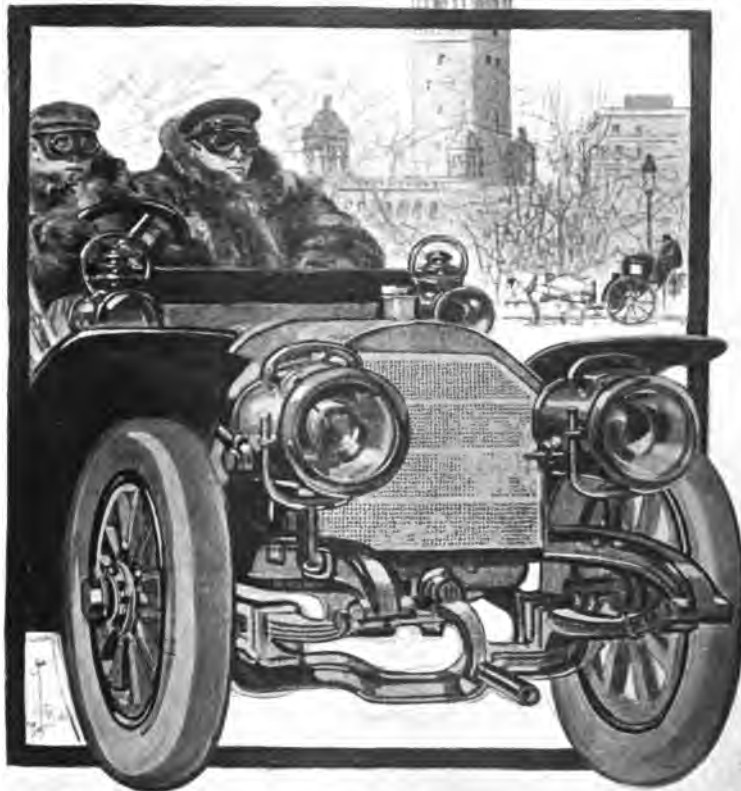


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**COVERS IN 1897 AND 1910
 J. C. LEYENDECKER**

Collier's

THE NATIONAL WEEKLY



VOL. XXXV NO. 17

JANUARY 20, 1906

PRICE 15 CENTS

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COLLIER'S WEEKLY COVER

January 20, 1906

J. C. LEYENDECKER

327



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The Leslie-Judge Company*

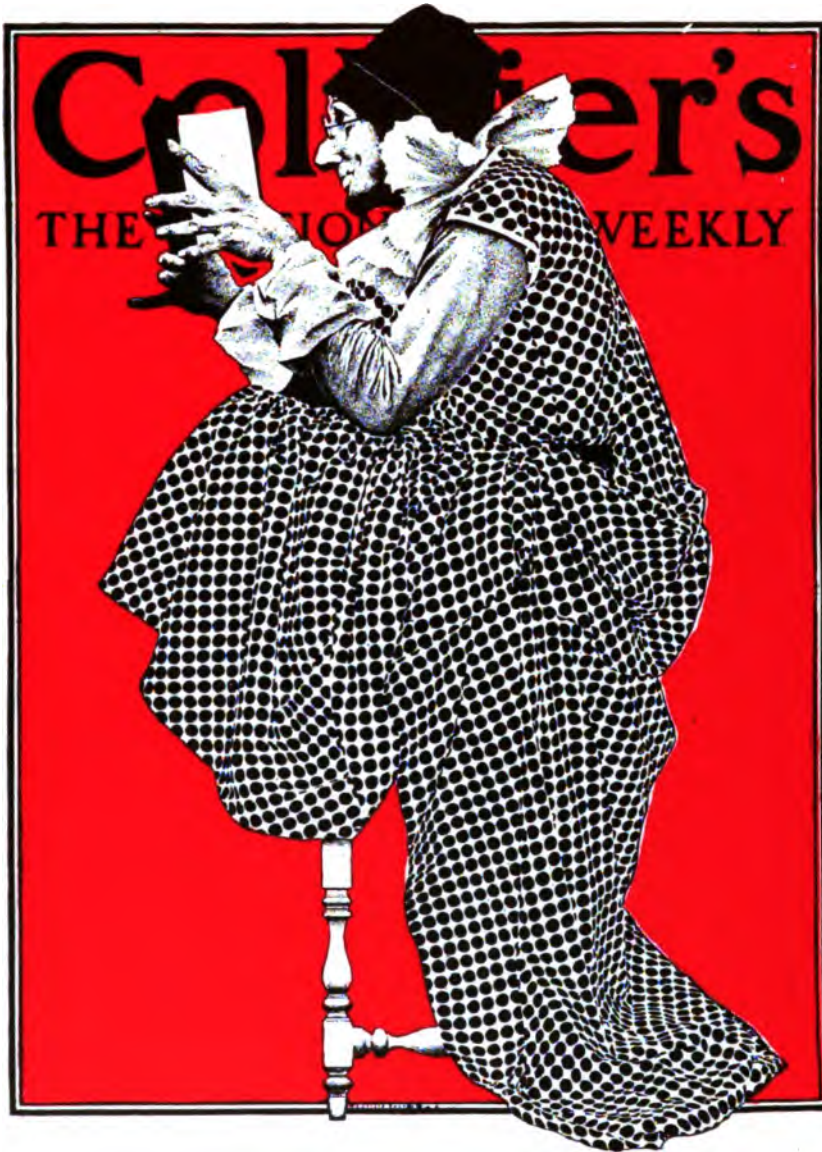
JUDGE COVER
January 28, 1911
J. C. LEYENDECKER
329

to comment. There is a presentation of a peculiarly difficult action—not of *suspended* motion, but of *continued* motion. It is a snap-shot on canvas.

The three examples of Mr. Parrish's cover designs are at once interesting and characteristic, showing as they do his masterful studies of shadow, and his never-disappointing quaintness of underlying conception. The colors are strong and well-disposed and possess that rare value of combined power and delicacy. The masses are flat, and the shadows cleanly applied, while the lettering is admirably adequate and very skillfully incorporated with the figure. In the case of a legend less familiar to the public than "*Collier's, The National Weekly,*" one would seriously question the license to obliterate so much of it by the super-position of the figures, but where the text is so well known, one is glad to exchange legibility for interesting incorporation.

In the delightfully quaint figure of the book-lover perched upon the high stool, one finds Mr. Parrish in his happiest vein. The subject, suggesting no particular period or nationality in the matter of dress is thoroughly and entirely peculiar to Mr. Parrish's own imagination, and in point of clever technique illustrates how the careful study of *accurate* foreshortening in the pattern on a piece of cloth may entirely do away with the necessity of actual shades and shadows. The folds here are certainly adequately presented, and the design as a whole is an almost unique example of a successful combination of two qualities generally of mutual detraction—qualities of decorative value and of general breadth. The design is strong and simple, but suggests more than its actual two printings by reason of the *texture* presented in the gown and the clever manipulation of the red background.

Upon an analysis of this cover design, it would seem that Mr. Parrish has obtained the greatest range in color that is possible in two flat



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**COLLIER'S WEEKLY COVER
MAXFIELD PARRISH (1910)**

331

Collier's

FICTION

NUMBER

For July



The
Guest
That Tarried

By
SIR GILBERT
PARKER

Buddha's
Eye

By
JUSTUS
MILES
FORMAN

Bread on
The Waters

By
PAUL ARMSTRONG

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COLLIER'S WEEKLY COVER

June 26, 1909

MAXFIELD PARRISH

333

Collier's

THE NATIONAL WEEKLY



INDEPENDENCE NUMBER

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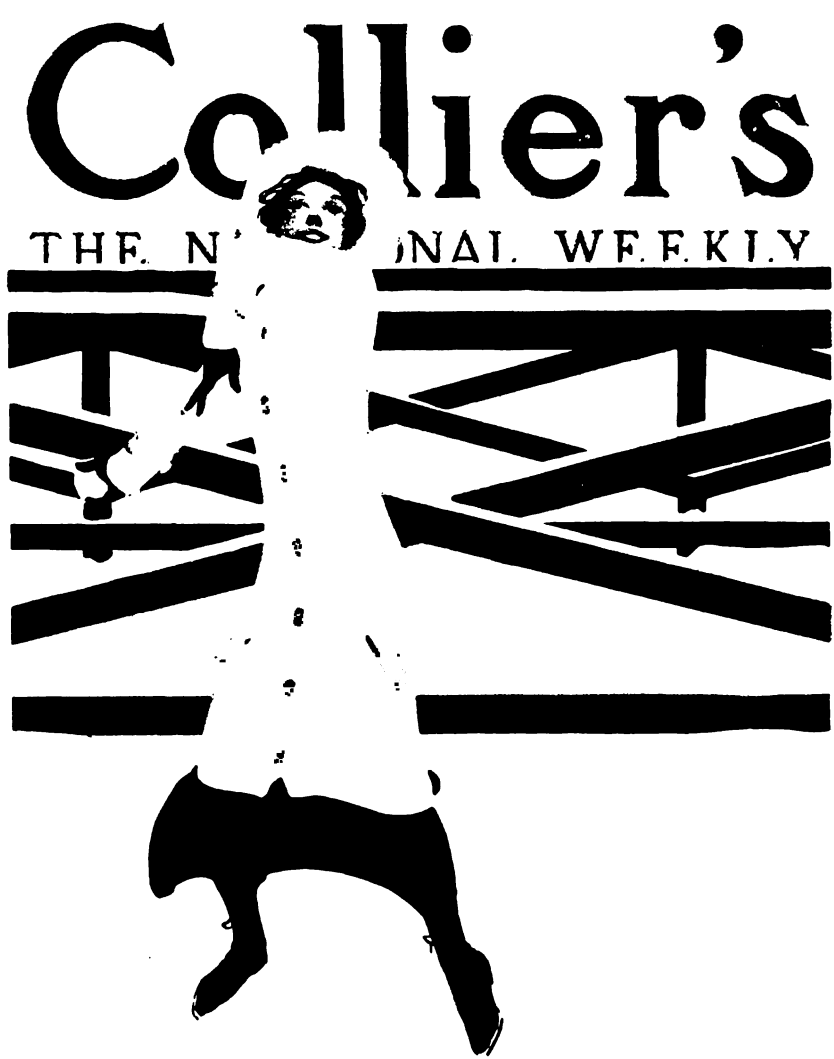
COLLIER'S WEEKLY COVER
MAXFIELD PARRISH

335

printings. There are the plain red and black masses, with a gray half-tone obtained by the fine stippled work. This effects an impression of three distinct values, with a fourth chromatic element cleverly brought out by contrast—an element too often ignored, for we rarely think of the importance of white as a color.

Robert J. Wildhack, even in more pretentious works, has rarely exhibited an example of greater general charm of idea and treatment, or greater excellence from the standpoint of poster-values than in his "Snow-Girl" cover for "*Collier's*." The lettering is no less legible in its presentation than the figure or than the whole idea to be expressed. The coloring is simple but suggestive of considerable range, and at the same time is unquestionably appropriate. The sky is a winter sky, the snow is the clean, unspotted expanse of the country. In small points of reality—those points so important in the "story" told by a poster, but so often overlooked by the designers—this example is admirable. The finesse of detail, subtle but legible that expresses *heat* in the "*September Scribner's*" poster is no less cleverly applied here to express *cold*—and snow. The girl's face has the warmth of color resulting from frosty air, she is as appropriately dressed for her environment as the girl on the beach—quite as informally and as much in style. Where one is all in white, even to pumps and stockings, and carries a white parasol in September, the other wears heavy storm-boots, short skirt and white knitted coat in December. And it is eminently accurate and convincing to state—as Mr. Wildhack has stated it in this drawing—that when snow is of proper consistency to make snow-balls, it is also in a condition to stick in the soles of one's shoes.

The cover design for "*Collier's*"—a Spanish Dancer—by Adolph Treidler, is one of his happiest drawings, and possesses many



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COLLIER'S WEEKLY COVER
December 17, 1910
ROBERT J. WILDHACK
337

points of interest and excellence which are obvious upon the most casual glance, and which stand the test of a closer study and analysis. It is work of this kind that seems of an excellence out of all proportion to its transient function, appearing, as it does, only for one week. Such a sketch as this has poster value so far above most current work that it must not be dismissed after its week upon the news-stands.

The Condé Nast trio of magazines, "Vogue," "Vanity Fair" and "House & Garden," under the brilliant art directorship of Heyworth Campbell, present the most interesting group of covers in America. One of the first and most prominent names in this group is that of Helen Dryden, who was one of the first American artists to develop a style which is as clever as modern French work, yet attuned to the tastes and appreciations of this country. It is fair enough to say that she set a style (certainly it has had an army of followers) and popularized a type of charming yet sophisticated art which has widely influenced advertising as well as cover work. She epitomized "smartness," and gave it a form and a place in the informal art of this country.

"House and Garden" covers do not attempt the "smartness" of "Vogue," but always achieve an interesting and refreshing quality of modernism, expressed by different artists. The "*House and Garden*" cover shown is by Charles Livingston Bull, better known for his splendid bird and animal drawings.

"*Vanity Fair*" covers are of astonishing variety, and intended to come each month in the way of a surprise. There have been F. X. Leyendecker covers, and others by "Fish," the famous English girl, Helen Dryden, Everett Shinn, G. Wolfe Plank (who has also done a number of beautiful "Vogue" Covers), John Held, Thelma Cudlipp and others. Some of these covers possess striking poster values, while others are more distinctly cover drawings—especially those of Plank.



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COLLIER'S WEEKLY COVER
March 25, 1911
ADOLPH TREIDLER

339



House & Garden



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HOUSE & GARDEN COVER

February, 1918

CHARLES LIVINGSTON BULL

341





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The Vogue Company*

VOGUE COVER
October 1st, 1914
HELEN DRYDEN
343

Not long after the rise of Helen Dryden to magazine cover prominence came Neysa McMein, whose work, entirely different in character, has attained the widest popularity. A long series of covers for "McClure's" magazine, and a great many for "The Woman's Home Companion" and "The Saturday Evening Post" have lifted the old critical stigma from the "pretty girl" cover, which was in danger of losing its popularity because generally so poorly done. By remarkable ability as a pastellist, and through the important detail of real taste and discrimination in the matter of models, hats and gowns, Miss McMein has put exceptional values into her covers which give them more than the passing popularity of a fad. They are really worth while, and really beautify the magazines on which they appear.

At this point mention should be made of Anita Parkhurst, also a brilliant pastellist, Ruth Eastman, Jessie Wilcox Smith, Sarah Stilwell Weber and Lucile Patterson Marsh, all of whom have attained high distinction in the magazine cover field. Ruth Eastman's work, perhaps, excels in poster values, because it possesses breadth and color. Her series for "*Motor*" has included some of the best poster covers seen on the newsstands for several years.

Two interesting covers, each characteristic of its artist, are seen in the "*Saturday Evening Post*" cover by John E. Sheridan, and the "*Everybody's*" cover by C. B. Falls. Of the two, the Falls cover is obviously the better poster—it is, in fact, a splendid poster, and typical of much of Falls' work during the war. If the demands of advertising work allowed them more time, no doubt we would see more covers by both Sheridan and F. Nelson Abbot.

The "*Colliers*" cover, showing the tense figure of a French soldier behind a machine gun, with a lurid sunset in the background, is a characteristic example of the technique of Herbert Paus, who has come strongly

M^cCLURE'S



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McCLURE'S MAGAZINE COVER

July, 1919

NEYSA McMEIN

345

into poster prominence in recent years. The quality of his line is very interesting, and his color strong and unusual and well arranged. During the early part of the war "Colliers" brought out a sequence of splendid poster covers by Penfield, Fancher, Paus and Treidler—some of the best poster covers ever seen on American magazines.

A lengthy and interesting list might be presented, if one had space to include it in this chapter, naming the artists who have made striking and popular magazine covers possessing more or less poster value.

"The Saturday Evening Post," notwithstanding its limitation to two-color printing, continues to bring out effective covers, and calls upon the most brilliant illustrators to produce its annual quota of fifty-two. Among these are Neysa McMein, J. C. Leyendecker, C. Coles Phillips, Cushman Parker, Anita Parkhurst and Sarah Stillwell Weber.

Orson Lowell frequently gives the cover of "Judge" a brilliantly executed painting, and "Life" now and then runs a cover by Maxfield Parrish.

The field is one of exceptional interest, and the magazine cover seems to secure, in most cases, the most spontaneous and interesting work of our ablest illustrators and painters. And since most of these are also working on posters and advertising illustrations, the news-stands should be carefully followed by all who are interested in poster art in this country.

Bearing in mind that these magazine covers were selected for the poster-points of simplicity of idea, line and color, unbalanced composition, breadth of mass, general adequacy in scale (if not in actual incorporation) of lettering and figure, as well as general appropriateness and suggestive qualities, their claims to consideration as posters, quite apart from their intrinsic interest, may perhaps have been made manifest.

May 1919



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International Magazine
Company (Motor Magazine)*

MOTOR COVER
May, 1919
RUTH EASTMAN
347

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST

Published Weekly
Founded 1728 by Benj. Franklin

JANUARY 5, 1918

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SATURDAY EVENING POST COVER

January 5th, 1918
JOHN E. SHERIDAN

349



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EVERYBODY'S MAGAZINE COVER

January, 1918

C. B. FALLS

351

5¢ a copy
January 22, 1916

Collier's

THE NATIONAL WEEKLY



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COLLIER'S WEEKLY COVER

January 22, 1916

HERBERT PAUS

353





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COLLIER'S WEEKLY COVER
October 31, 1903
FREDERICK DORR STEELE
355

CHAPTER VIII.

The Capacity of the Poster.

Up to this point one has hesitated to confuse the principles, more or less technical, which should govern the delineation of the poster, with certain subtler, though no less interesting theories regarding its *capacity for expression*.

It can by no means be said that an elaborate idea is in any way essential to the conception of a good poster. This chapter is intended merely to pursue a poster-analysis to a finer conclusion, with a view to determining how much may be expressed, and in how elaborate a manner such an expression may be presented in a strong poster.

In the first chapter a rather careful analysis was made of Mr. Wildhack's "*September*" poster; from which it was to be deduced that inasmuch as September is a hot month, suggestions of heat should appear in such a design, as well as that certain other ideas, not so rudimentary, might be brought forth in the whole.

To fully determine the capacity of the poster, a minute analysis of three examples will be undertaken, after an exposition of some general considerations which should govern such an analysis.

In the first place it seems obvious and appropriate to state an analogy between the details shown in a poster, and a stage-setting. The two are designed for the same audience. It is as necessary for the one as for the other to achieve its success through the power of suggestion. The figures in a poster are the actors; and the accessories, the "properties,"

however subordinate, must be appropriate, and create that same artificial yet sincere simulation of a potential reality that makes the stage a vital factor in our interests. Given the characters, the *mise en scene* must be so studied as to give the intended impression, or setting, the *most forcibly* to the *greatest number* of people.

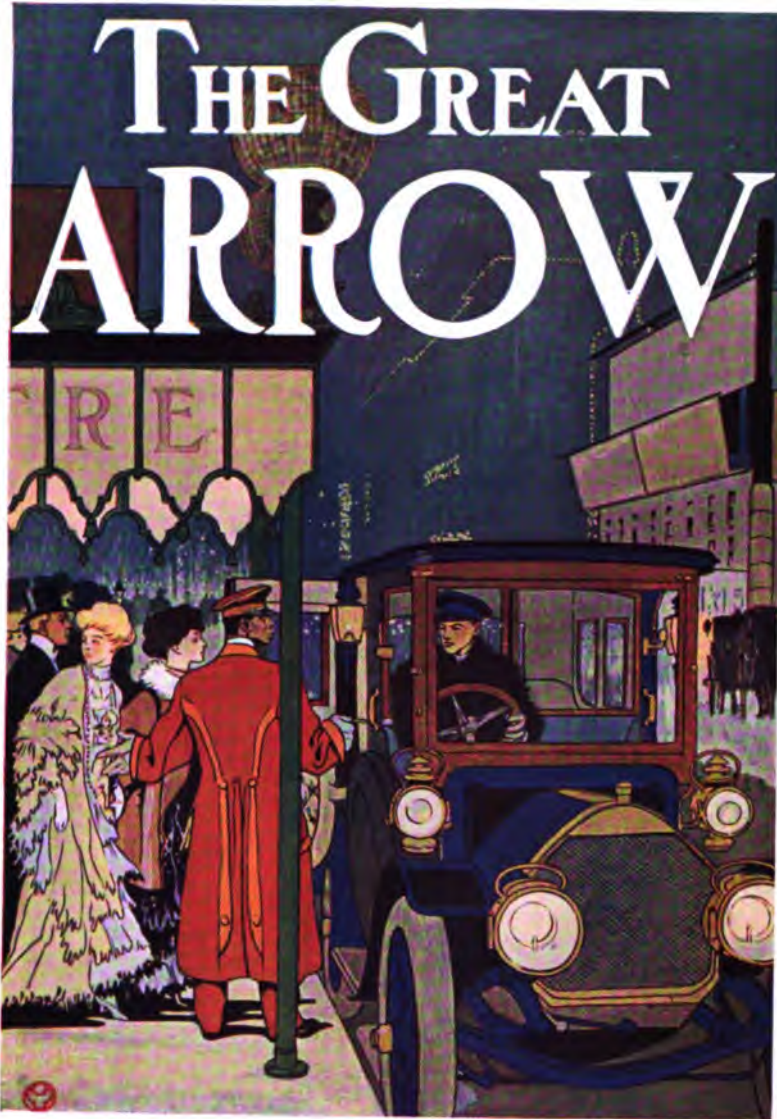
The audience of the poster is no more an invited clique of favored cognoscenti than is the audience of the play. The idea to be suggested must be made readable, or fail utterly. It is true that some of the finer points may be overlooked by those not attuned for their proper comprehension, but it is the *average* intellect which is to be considered in the matter—not that of the *illiterati* or the connoisseurs.

Granted, then, that poster-craft has much to liken it to stage-craft, the following quotations from an essay on the latter by Mr. Haldane Mac Fall may well preface the poster-analysis hereafter:

“Art is Suggestion. A scene may be an absolutely true transcript of the real place, but it may be utterly lacking in the power to suggest that atmosphere and mysterious essence which we call the mood of the place. . . . It is through a man’s imagination that he reaches the Realities. You shall not increase the suggestion of great cold in a scene on the heights of Olympus by putting foot-warmers in the hands of the gods.”

By the same token, it is through the imaginative omissions in a poster that those all-important potential realities must be brought out. Public appreciation has never been gained by insulting public intelligence, however blind that intelligence may often seem to be.

In Mr. Penfield’s poster for the “*Great-Arrow*” motor car, is presented an extraordinary example of suggestive “stage setting” in a poster. The light—intangible, indefinable, but all-pervasive of the million lights of Times Square is over the whole. A crush of hurried after-theatre street



THE GREAT ARROW
EDWARD PENFIELD (1907)

traffic is *suggested* (not shown), by the one motor car and two hansom cabs. The pressing crowd, pouring out of the lighted theatre is adequately expressed by no more than four figures actually shown, and indistinct impressions of a few others. Yet there is the whole *atmosphere* of the place and the hour and the people—the accessories are consummately handled to bring to one's mind in the simplest terms a picture of a scene which would be only a confused medley in literal delineation.

Now with all these elements of a very detailed "local color," it must be realized that strong as they are, they do not infringe upon the strength of the advertisement—the clear, simple, and forceful impression of a motor-car *de luxe*. One has the detail; by its aptness the subject of the poster has been the more directly "brought home," yet the impression of this detail, however interesting in itself, has been in no way detrimental to the real *simplicity* of the whole poster.

And suppose that by reason of never having seen the actual place, or a similar place, the host of mental suggestions fall on sterile ground—suppose that all the fine points miss fire, yet one still has the clear, simple, and forceful impression of a motor-car *de luxe*, with its name in bold proportions, and its lines in bold brush-strokes. As a whole, it is admirably illustrative of the poster as a *vehicle for the expression of theatrical values*.

Lucien Métivet's poster for "*Eugénie Buffet*," presents, at the first glance, the figure of a girl, singing in the street. If you see no more, the poster has nevertheless succeeded as a poster. It has shown that the idea to be presented is that of a girl, singing in the street. Eugénie Buffet's repertoire at the time was a collection of songs of the *grisette*—the working girl of Paris.

Further suggestions are so successfully subordinated that this main impression is as clear as though there were nothing more on the sheet.

**EUGÉNIE
BUFFET**

dans son
**REPERTOIRE
RÉALISTE**

**Concert
de
LA CIGALE**
124. Boulevard ROCHECHOUART

**EUGENIE
BUFFET
LUCIEN
MÉTIVET
(1893)
361**

No harm has been done by the obtrusion of puzzling accessories to destroy the simplicity of the whole. What has been overlooked is the loss of the careless one—it is not to his detriment, or to the detriment of the poster.

But perhaps there is more to be seen than the mere figure of a girl, singing in the street. In her face is written all the misery, the irrepressible gaiety of spirit, the oppression and yet the innate freedom of her class. Her drawn face is oppressed, but the toss of her head is free. It is not the portrait of an individual but of a class.

And of the finer expression of the idea to be suggested, much would be lost without an appropriate setting. She must be in the street, at such times as she is not at work. The day is done, the shops are closed. She has worked all day, but now she is free, and is singing. There are other figures, figures of the streets of Paris, and there is a sky-line of houses, all the stage-settings. But in the center of the stage, oblivious to all else, and eclipsed by nothing is the *grisette*—a girl, singing in the street.

This quality—this simple expression, the *atmosphere* of the story to be told—appears in Steinlen's poster book-cover, for an edition of Aristide Bruant's popular songs—“*Dans la Rue.*” Here the idea of the *street* has been seized and portrayed in a manner at once remarkably realistic and thoroughly characteristic of Steinlen. There is emphasized the fact that the songs and monologues are of the street, essentially and entirely. The figures are plainly those of working people as in “*Eugénie Buffet,*” coming home in the dusk. There can be no doubt about it. The group in the foreground is absolutely simple and sincere in its treatment, and tells its story with no confusion or indirectness. Further back, less distinct, another line of returning workers, men, and women, are tramping home all singing *in the street*. And still further, against the sky-line, rises the quaint, tumbled line of buildings; and to give the flavor of the particular



DANS LA RUE
THÉOPHILE-ALEXANDRE STEINLEN
363

locality to those who know Paris as Steinlen knew it, the sails of the Red Mill stand out against the lighter darkness behind them.*

But it cannot be objected that the introduction of these subtle accessories has in any way impaired the strength of the composition, or the directness of the story. To the casual observer, it is a poster design of some people, presumably French, even presumably Parisian, singing in the street. To one who knows Paris, it is all this, and is besides, Paris itself with all the host of intimate local recollections that are to be found in a poster which is at once a poster and a dramatic document.

An epigrammatist has said that champagne is like criticism, in that if good it is excellent; if it is poor, no commodity could be more utterly wretched. One could say the same of a poster. A play, a statue, a book, a picture will all have a redeeming value in some inconsidered particular even if they fail of their main purpose. When a poster fails, its failure is utter and irretrievable, and its inevitable destiny is its consignment to the limbo of waste paper.

*The same expression of dramatic and literary values may be observed by those who are fortunate enough to possess a copy of the "Chansons de Momartre," a music-cover by the same designer.

INDEX

THE NAMES OF ARTISTS ARE GIVEN IN LARGE AND SMALL CAPITALS;
POSTER TITLES IN ITALICS

- ABBOTT, F. NELSON, 199, 200, 344
Alcasar d'Eté, 20
ALDIN, CECIL, 70, 86
Ali Ebn Becar, 181
Alice, 179
America Gave You, 290, 291
America's Tribute to Britain, 185
American Library Association Poster, 192, 197, 200, 282, 283
American Line, 96, 105
American Posters, 10-14, 129-252, 260, 265, 276-360
Anglo-Indian Recruiting Poster, 266, 267
ANONYMOUS, 111, 257, 259, 267
Aristide Bruant, 48, 362
Arrow Collar, 164, 171
ASHE, E. M., 279, 284
- BAKST, LÉON, 122, 124, 125
BASCH, ARPAD, 122
Bastille Day Poster, 292, 295
BEALE, C. C., 200, 201, 204
BEARDSLEY, AUBREY, 60-65, 94, 138, 140
Becket, 73
BEGGARSTAFF BROTHERS, 70, 71, 73, 86
Belgian Canal Boat Fund, 260, 263
Belgian Posters, 96, 105, 107, 252
BELL, R. ANNING, 62, 67, 70
BENDA, WLADISLAW T., 272, 273, 290, 295
BENDERLY, M., 120
BENOIS, ALEXANDRE, 124
Berner Oberland Wintersport, 121
Bianchi Automobile, 111
Bibliography of War Posters, 252
BIRD, E. B., 138, 140
Bodley Head, 63
Boll's Kindergarderobe, 94, 101
BONNARD, PIERRE, 33, 48, 53
Book of Book-Plates, 70, 75
Book Plate, 214, 220
Books Wanted, 192, 197, 282, 283
Bosch Magneto, 94, 95
- Boy Scout Liberty Loan Poster*, 281, 284
Boys! Remember Nurse Cavell, 264, 267
BRADLEY, WILL, 130-138, 140
BRAGDON, CLAUDE FAYETTE, 138
BRANGWYN, FRANK, 72, 86, 260, 264, 265
BREHM, GEORGE, 140, 164, 171
Bring Him Home, 264, 267
Britain's Call to Arms, 264
Britishers! Enlist To-day, 260, 261
BROWN, F. GREGORY, 87, 93
BROWNE, TOM, 70, 86
BRYCE, HELEN BYRNE, 93
Bubbles, 60
BULL, CHARLES LIVINGSTON, 277, 282, 338, 341
BURNS, CECIL L., 266, 267
Buttes Chaumont, 20
- CALDANZANO, L., 110
CAMBELLOTTI, D., 110
CAMPBELL, BLENDON, 142, 191
CAFFIELLO, L., 120
CARQUEVILLE, W., 138, 140
CASAS, RAMON, 120
Casey, Frank D., 276, 278
CASSIERS, H., 96, 105, 107
Century Magazine Posters, 143, 146, 147, 153
Chalmers Motor Car, 208, 209
Chansons de Momartre, 364
Chap Book, 133, 136, 140, 141
CHAPMAN, FRED, 266, 271
CHAVANNES, PUVIS DE, 33
CHÉRET, JULES, 4, 6, 8-10, 15-34, 38, 40, 48, 52, 62, 72, 94, 110, 142, 146, 320
Chesterfield Cigarettes 161, 204
Chicago Sunday Tribune, 131
Chickering Pianos, 200, 201
Children's Book Week Poster, 213
Chinese Posters, 124
Chini, G., 110
Cigarettes Fanches, 170, 187
Circular Staircase, 164, 167

- CLIVE, HENRY, 146
 Collection of War Posters, 252
Collier's Weekly Covers, 169, 220, 292, 300-303, 307, 309, 311, 318, 319, 327, 330-339, 344, 346, 353, 355
Colman's Blue, 70
 Colonial Posters, 260, 264, 266, 267
Columbia Graphophone, 200, 203
Come On! 279
Committee on Public Information Poster, 290, 291
Comptoir National d'Escompte de Paris, 256, 257
Concert de la Cigale, 52
Conchita, 110
Conservation Posters, 251, 252, 285, 287, 297
 COOPER, F. G., 170, 183, 185, 188, 276, 284-286
Corner of the Studio, 177
 COSSARD, A., 33, 52, 57
Coulisses de l'Opera, 16, 17, 20, 24
Country Carts Series, 220
Covers in 1897 and 1910, 320, 325
 COX, E. A., 89
 CRAIG, GORDON, 70, 77
 CRANE, WALTER, 62, 69
Credit Commercial de France, 256, 257
 CUDLIPP, THELMA, 338
 Czecho-Slovakian Posters, 124, 266, 271

Daily Herald Poster, 91
Dans la Rue, 362-364
Danse du Feu, 24, 25
 DAVENPORT, EDMUND, 204, 207
Dernieres Cartouches, 256, 257
Derry and Toms, 92, 93
Diaphane Rice Powder, 24, 26, 29
Divan Japonais, 48, 49
Djer-Kiss, 146
Don Quixotte, 71
 DORÉ, GUSTAVE, 33
 DRYDEN, HELEN, 338, 343, 344
 DUDOVITCHE, N., 110, 120
 Dutch Posters, 122

 EASTMAN, RUTH, 344, 347
Echo, 135
 EDELFELT, ALBERT, 124

Edison Masda Lamp, 146, 151
 EDWARDS, GEORGE WHARTON, 138, 140
 EMERSON, CASPER, 290, 291
En Flandes se ha Puesto el Sol, 122, 123
Enfant Prodigue, 60
 English Posters, 60-93, 252, 256, 259-266
Esposizione d'Igiene, 110
Esposizione Internationale, 110, 113
Eugénie Buffet, 52, 360-362
Everybody's Magazine Cover, 344, 351
Exposition a la Bodinière, 37, 38

 FAIVRE, JULES ABEL, 252-254, 256, 257, 292
 FALLS, C. B., 188, 200, 276, 277, 282, 283, 344, 351
 FANCHER, LOUIS, 140, 142, 164, 170, 173, 175, 276, 346
Fate Tutti il Vostro Dover!, 266, 269
Fatima Cigarettes, 204, 208, 209
Feed a Fighter, 286, 287
Ferry's Seeds, 146
First to Fight, 277, 282
 FISH, 338
 FISHER, HARRISON, 288, 289
Fisk Tires, 146
 FLAGG, JAMES MONTGOMERY, 292, 295
Folies Bergère, 16, 20, 25
Follies, 70, 81, 142
Food, 285
Food is Ammunition, 286, 287
 FORINGER, A. E., 286, 288, 289
Forward to Victory, 256, 259, 260
 "FOUNTAIN, PETER," 318
Four Minute Men Poster, 292, 293
France Champagne, 48
 French Posters, (Frontispiece), 1, 8-10, 15-60, 252-257, 360-364

Gaiety Girl, 70, 79
 German Posters, 94-103, 272
 GIBSON, CHARLES DANA, 276
 Gilbert, Cass, 278
Gimbel Brothers, 92
Giovanni Frangipani, 110
Girl on the Land, 292, 297
Gismonda, 38, 41
Golf Calendar, 220
 GORDON, LEON, 200, 204, 205

- GOULD, J. J., 138, 140, 145, 316-318
Grand Hotel Regoledo, 117, 120
GRANT, GORDON, 290, 295
GRASSET, EUGÈNE, 33, 40, 51
Greatest Mother in the World, 286, 288, 289
GRIFFENHAGEN, MAURICE, 72, 83
GRUN, 52
GUILLAUME, 33, 52
HALL, TOM, 12-14
HALLSTRÖM, GUNNAR, 96, 109
Halt the Hun, 279
HALLSTRÖM, GUNNAR, 96, 109
HANSI, 256
HARDY, DUDLEY, 70, 72, 79, 86
Harper's Magazine Posters, 130, 162, 215-223, 225, 227-235
Hart, Schaffner and Marx Posters, 192, 197-200, 204, 205, 249
HASKELL, ERNEST, 138, 140, 142
HASSALL, J., 70, 81, 86, 260, 263
Hau and Company Champagne, 69
Have You a Red Cross Service Flag, 288, 289
HAZENPLUG, FRANK, 138, 140, 141
HETTLAND, W. E., 200, 203
HELD, JOHN, 338
HELKING, FRANCIS, 122
Help Your Country, 260, 265
Help Them, 290, 291
Hermann Scherrer, Tailor, 94, 97, 99
HERTER, ALBERT, 288, 289
Hip-Hip! Another Ship, 290, 291
Hire's Root Beer, 146
HOHENSTEIN, A., 110, 119, 120
HOHLWEIN, LUDWIG, 94, 96-101, 164
Holeproof Hosiery, 192, 195
Holland Sketches, 224, 226, 237, 239, 241, 308
HOOPER, W. H., 61
HOPPER, E., 288, 290, 291
HORTER, EARL, 12-14
House and Garden Covers, 338, 341
Hungarian Posters, 122
HUTAFF, AUGUST, 277, 282
I Buffoni, 115
IBELS, H. G., 48
ILLIAN, GEORGE, 286, 287
In the Name of Mercy, 288, 289
Inland Printer Covers, 320, 325
Interwoven Socks, 159
Irene Henry, 48
Italian Posters, 110-120, 252, 266, 269
IVANOWSKI, 142
Ivory Soap, 152, 155
JACKSON, F. ERNEST, 264
Jane Avril, 48
Japanese Posters, 124, 126, 127
Jeanne d'Arc, 40, 51
Job Papier a Cigarettes, 16, 24, 27, 38, 40, 47, 48, 55
Join the Army Air Service, 277, 282
Join the United States School Garden Army, 295
JONAS, LUCIEN, 256, 257
Judge Covers, 320, 329, 346
KAUFFER, E. MCKNIGHT, 91, 92
Keep it Coming, 286, 287
KING, HAMILTON, 2, 142, 188
Lait pur de la Vingeanne, (Frontispiece), 8, 38, 136
LASKOFF, F., 120
LAUTREC (See Toulouse-Lautrec).
LÉANDRE, C., 60
Lend Him a Hand, 279, 284, 288
Lend the Way They Fight, 279, 284
LEROUX, AUGUSTE, 256, 257
Leslie Carter, 38
LEYENDECKER, F. X., 140, 318, 320-323, 338
LEYENDECKER, J. C., 140, 146, 152-161, 204, 281, 284, 320, 325-329, 346
Life Covers, 346
Lippincott's Magazine Poster, 140, 145
LIPSCOMBE, GUY, 260, 261, 264
Liverpool Art School, 62, 67
Loan Posters, 251-257, 267, 269, 275, 279, 281
London Underground Railways, 86-89, 92, 264
Lorenzaccio, 38
LOWELL, ORSON, 346
Lux Soap, 70, 81
Luxite Hosiery, 192
McClure's Magazine Covers, 318, 321, 344, 345

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